

INSIDE

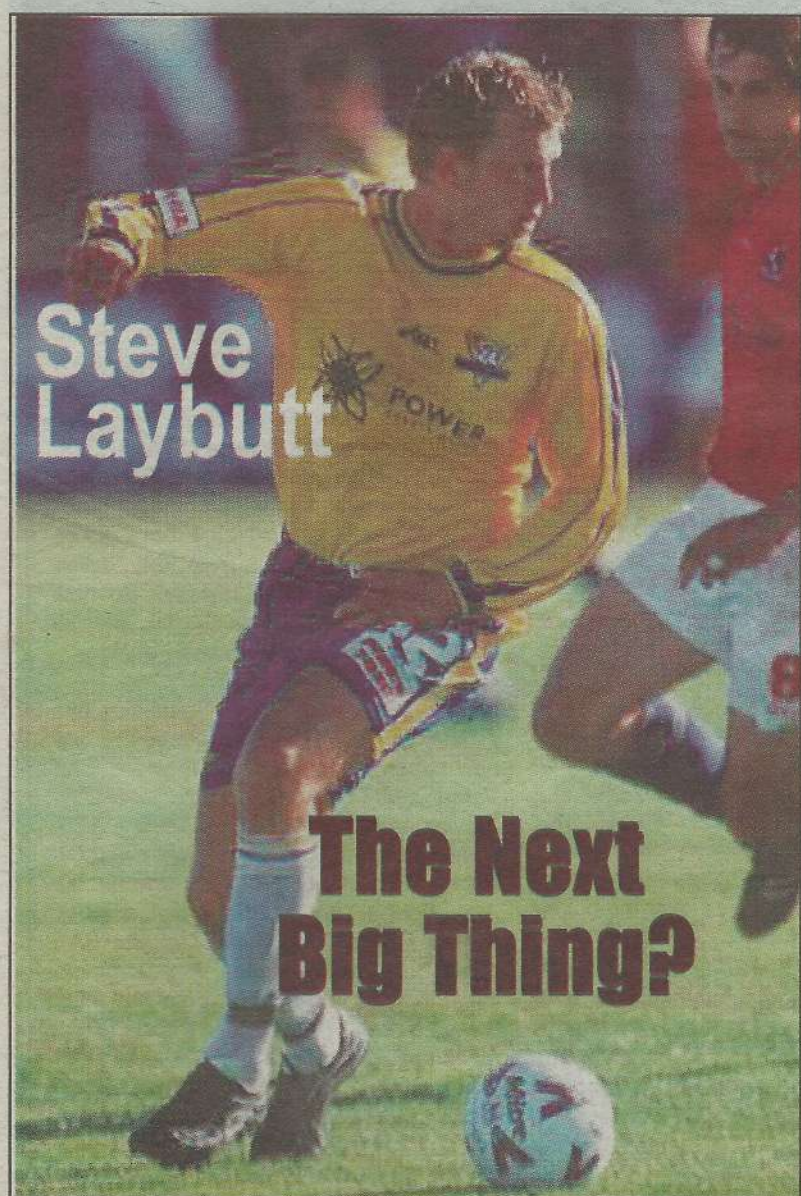
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SOCCER

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NSL SHOWPIECE FOR REGIONAL AUSTRALIA?



By Greg Blake

The first NSL grand final of the new millennium could also be the first to be played outside an Australian capital city centre. Newcastle's Marathon Stadium or WIN Stadium in Wollongong will be considered as possible venues for the 2000 grand final, as will Sydney's new sporting Mecca at Homebush, the 100,000-plus capacity Olympic Games venue.

Finals-bound Newcastle Breakers and Wollongong City stand "a realistic chance" of pleading their respective cases for a home city grand final, should either club finish top two on the ladder and win their way into the biggest game on the domestic calendar through the first versus second major semi final.

National Soccer League general manager, Stefan Kamasz, has conceded as much as both the Breakers and Wolves continue their seemingly inexorable march towards the finals series, which starts in late May and climaxes with the 1999/2000 grand final in June.

But Kamasz added that the league would probably take the game to Sydney should the biggest game of the year involve a Sydney-based club.

"We have to be seen to be fair to any club which earns the right (to host the grand final)," he said.

"I certainly think we'd probably play (the grand final) at Marathon Stadium.

"You can get up to about 30,000 people in there and there is a stack of corporate facilities and good ground facilities.

"But we might also move the game (to

Sydney).

"Let's say Newcastle got the grand final and played Perth, you wouldn't take the game to Sydney, would you?

"And while we couldn't play at Brandon Park there is WIN Stadium (in Wollongong).

"However if it was Wollongong against Sydney Olympic, although no-one wants to deny Wollongong home city preference, it may be the best idea commercially to move the game to Parramatta, SFS or even Homebush."

Kamasz also revealed that the NSL has been offered the chance to consider playing the 2000 grand final at Sydney's glamorous new Olympic Games venue at Homebush, although the Sydney Football Stadium and Parramatta Stadium are also being considered for a play-off series likely to be dominated by NSW representation.

The race for a top two finish has been reduced to a field of five clubs, of which four - Newcastle, Wollongong, Sydney Olympic and Marconi - are NSW-based, leaving Perth Glory as the only interstate interloper.

Perth is currently negotiating the use of Subiaco Oval for their home finals.

Although home city advantage for the team advancing through the two-legged major semi final has been accepted as NSL policy since the competition reverted to championship-deciding finals series back in 1988, the league has always reserved the right to make a final decision on choice of venue.

Newcastle coach, Lee Sterrey, believes precedents set should ensure that the team first through should host the grand final automatically.

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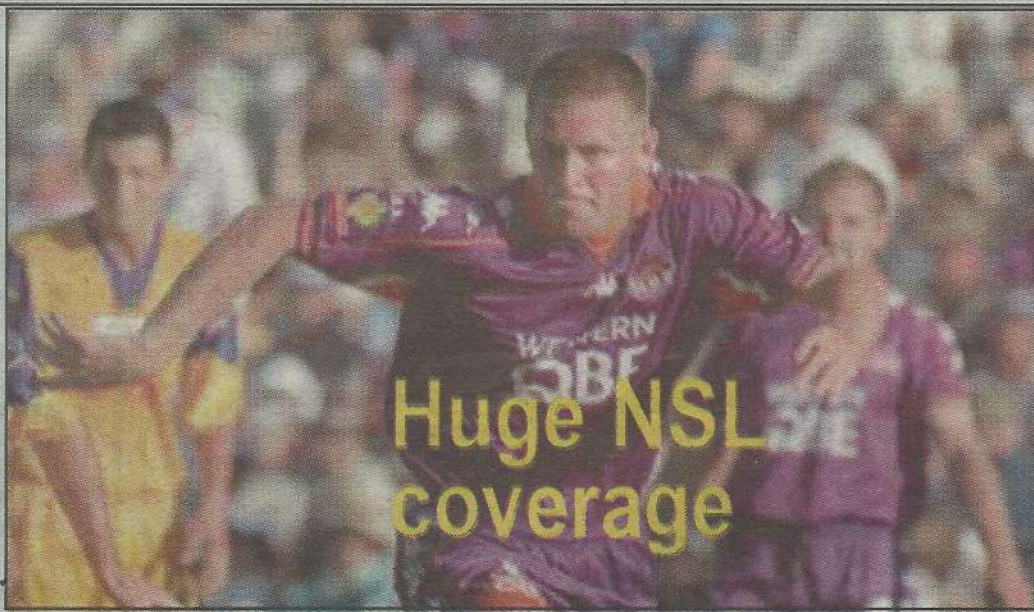
Corica to J-League

All the Aussies Abroad news
Warren Medal

Time for changes to voting?

NSL reform agenda

Delay looking more certain



Crooky



What a pity every game we play isn't a derby match, especially against Marconi. It seems as though whenever Northern Spirit takes on Marconi we lift a gear and we did it last Friday night to notch a deserved 2-1 win.

We have now played Marconi four times at North Sydney Oval and they yet to defeat us on home soil. In fact their 84th minute consolation goal was the first time they have found the back of the net at North Sydney Oval.

Last season we won 4-0 in the regular season match and then drew 0-0 in the first leg of the elimination semi final.

This year we have beaten them 1-0 and 2-1. Conversely we are yet to defeat Marconi at Marconi Stadium. In three matches we have gone down by a single goal in each match.

We have a chance to change that when we take on Marconi at Marconi Stadium later this season.

Last Friday night we managed to get on top of Marconi right from the outset and we took advantage of our dominance with an early goal.

It could have been 2-0 after seven minutes but for a great save from Marconi 'keeper Michael Turnbull, who turned a delightful chip from Nicola Berti onto the cross bar.

The match was also Nicola's best performance for the club and it looks like he is starting to show the form that took him to two World Cups as his fitness improves.

Against Marconi he looked more

at ease with the pace of the game and got himself around the park well. His passing game was also

improved and his defence, one of his trademarks, showed signs of returning. All in all it was very promising as far as Nicola is concerned.

The rest of our midfield also did very well. Troy Cranney was outstanding and did a lot of work on the right flank, while Michael Cunico and Robbie Slater also had good matches.

I also thought David Seal and Tony Perinich worked well together with Tony's pace forcing the mistake, which gave Sealy his seventh goal of the season (from the penalty spot.)

The only disappointing thing to come out of the game was the question: Why can't we do it week in, week out?

I guess we can only look forward to find the answer to that and on Friday night we take on the Kingz Football Club in Auckland.

The Kingz have been traveling well and they will be stung into action by their second half performance in conceding five goals against Wollongong.

We just have to make sure we take the same level of intensity into the Auckland match that we did against Marconi.

Ian Crook
Northern Spirit and England

S-news

Inside Soccer's
Australian news
and gossip

TEPLICE OR NOT TEPLICE

Next week will be a big one for Aussie Soccer on the international stage. Raul Blanco's Olyroos play Slovakia on March 22 in Bratislava and Holland March 28, in Weert. And the Socceroos play the Czech Republic on Wednesday March 29 in Teplice (to be screened early Thursday morning on SBS TV.) Three games without a loss? Don't rule it out.

LEEDS' ATTITUDE SOFTENING?

Leeds was first overseas club to give a release to Harry Kewell for the Czech Rep. Game. Incredible but true. Clearance for 23 players will be sought, but only 18 will be taken. It also means that Harry will be playing in the Czech Rep. twice in six days (Leeds are also playing there.) Due to injury/lack of match practice Joe Simunic will not be part of the Socceroo squad this time, but insiders say he wants to play for Australia as soon as possible. And speaking of Aussie talents, another one of our young stars in the NSL is off to overseas for trials in Europe (probably Germany) in April. Can't say yet but the guy is a huge talent.

SCOTT O'DONELL'S ASIA UPDATE

Former Gippsland Falcons and Brunei player, Brian Bothwell, had a dream debut for Geylang United in their first game of the S-League. Not only did he score the first of his team's two goals but he also won the Man of the Match award after his team's 2 - 0 victory over Darren Stewart's Balesteir Central.

In what was a rather scrappy game, Geylang completely dominated possession but found it difficult to break down the Balesteir defence. Balesteir, who obviously went into the match looking for a draw, seemed content to sit back and try and hold out Geylang and it looked like they might succeed until Bothwell got on the end of a Billy Bone cross to head in the first goal in the 77th minute.

Balesteir had only one shot on target, and that was a pile-driver from Darren Stewart from 30 metres out.

In the other games, Michael Garcia got off to a great start with his new club Marine Castle, scoring their only goal in a 1 - 1 draw with Clementi Khalsa. Marine Castle's Tony Carbone was also unlucky not to get on the score sheet, when he had his 25 metre shot touched over the bar by Clementi's keeper.

Mirko Jurilj's (from Sydney Utd) Sembawang Rangers fought out a dour draw with fellow northerners Woodlands Wellington 0 - 0, while Ernie Tapai's Home United lost 1 - 0 against Tanjong Pagar.

In the other results, SAFFC defeated Tampines Rovers 1 - 0, while Gombak United beat Jurong 1 - 0.

The S-League is in its fifth season. Vast amounts of money has been poured into the development of youth football in Singapore this year but unless some money is put into upgrading the playing surfaces, it is hard to see the quality of football in the S-League improving.

GLORY RE-SIGN TRIO

Scott Miller, Tony Franken and Gareth Naven all have signed new contracts with Glory. And congrats to Gareth Naven, who became a dad after the Power game. One player whose future is very uncertain is Con Boutsianis. His weekend interview in a local paper heavily criticized the club. He apparently watched the Power game from the Glory Shed. Meanwhile Cockburn City defender David Tarka is the latest W.A. talent to try his luck on the eastern seaboard, reports S-news' Brett

Klucznick. The 16-year old, who recently turned down an offer to join Sydney Olympic, has accepted a one-year scholarship at the A.I.S. in Canberra where he'll play in the national youth league.

CASTRO'S COSMOS

Cosmos lost 5-2 to Malaysia in a friendly last week, with Milin and Kolpak the scorers at the AIS grounds. And good news, Alex Castro is back after breaking his leg in round three. Expect him to play at least the last few rounds of the home and away.

POWER PACK SUPPORTERS

They sing and "they have loads of fun without the bad language." That's Parra's new supporters club. You can join them this Friday for the Carlton game at Bay 48 at Parra Stadium. Crewsy at Power back for Carlton game this Friday night? Malaysia was beaten 2-1 by Power with Kukucka and Griffiths scoring at the Melita Stadium in a friendly mid-week.

FIRST ANNUAL SOCCER PROGRAMME AWARDS

This year is the first year of these types of awards. It is open to any club here or NZ and all you have to do is submit three different editions of match-day programmes. There will be various awards with specific criteria. Queries to Derek Mott PO Box 261 Collins St West Vic 8007 or ring 0411044795

SPIRITED SEASON WINNERS

These are the winners of the *Spirited Season* book promotion, a book about the first season of Northern Spirit. Jennifer Yee of West Pennant Hills NSW, Connie Fabiatos of Clayton Nth Vic, Les Farkas of Minto NSW, Mark Taylor of Gympie NSW and T. Wilson of West Perth.

SILVA THE KIWIS?

Player profile: Aaron Silva. Player history: NZ U/17, U/20, U/23. From a recent Kingz (or Kinz as Adelaide City called them earlier this year). Really? So how come he still can't speak English after all these years in NZ, asks Sitter! Fanzine.

JOEYS SQUAD

Acting Joeys coach Les Scheinflug has named a 33-man squad before the new coach takes over. The lads are: Carl Valeri (ACT), Adrien Labutte (ACT), Steven Arnott (ACT), Sean Walsh (QLD), Daniel Varma (QLD), Ben Stevens (QLD), Andrew Byrne (QLD), Nathan Coe (QLD), Alex Davani (QLD), Fred Agius (SA), James Forde (SA), Mario Karlovic (SA), Terry Smith (SA), Adam Van Dommele (SA), Russell Waller (SA), Fred Au (VIC), Steve Esposito (VIC), David Puccio (VIC), Massimo Murdocca (VIC), Michael Edwards (VIC), Theo Petdis (VIC), Darren Broxton (WA), Anthony Danze (WA), Ryan Fredricks (WA), Gokhan Ada (NSW), Steven Baveas (NSW), Predrag Bojic (NSW), Michael Brown (NSW), Stephen Hallinan (NSW), Brett Holman (NSW), Jacob Rex (NSW), Phillip Weston (NSW), Matthew Engele (NSW)

COLOSIMO BACK

Simon Colosimo again looked impressive in his latest hit-out for Carlton. Playing against feeder club, Doncaster Rovers, Colosimo played in the middle of a back three and was rarely troubled according to the club's rather excellent net site at www.carltonsoccer.com He threw himself into a number of testing challenges, emerging unscathed, and consistently found teammates with raking 30-metre passes. Along with Colosimo, Andy Packer was another to impress along with Danny Vasilevski and David Terminello. Good to have you back Sime.

INSIDE SOCCER

PO BOX 3889
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

PHONE: (02) 9806 0554
FAX: (02) 9806 0553

MANAGING EDITOR: JOHN VRTARIC

Email: johnv@insidesoccer.com.au

EDITOR: AIDAN ORMOND

E-mail: editor@insidesoccer.com.au

Correspondents:

Melbourne: GREG BLAKE, MARK FISHER

Sydney: ROGER SLEEMAN, BEN CUBBY

IS's VALUED CONTRIBUTORS:

Alan Clark, Kevin Christopher, Melissa Muscat, Margaret Bowden, Stephen Webb, Donald Campbell, Paul Goodwin, Chris Dunkerley, Cameron Atfield, Lucio Viggiano, Dennis Gedling, Jeremy Ruane, Chris Conti, Richard Beazley, Michael Kmet, Mark Fowler, Daniela Raco, Anissa Tann-Darby, Ian Crook, Nick Guoth, Grant Stantall, Roy Hay, Peter Smith, Anita Bulan, Scott O'Donnell, Markian Jaworsky, Cliff Hammond, George Lemon, Nathan Long, Brett Klucznick, Robert Szoszkiewicz, Steven Bricknell, Steve Oldridge.

ADVERTISING: SYDNEY: JOHN VRTARIC
(02) 98060554 or 0412 698 185
ROGER SLEEMAN (02) 9806 0554/0415160297
MELBOURNE: GREG BLAKE (03) 9370 1217

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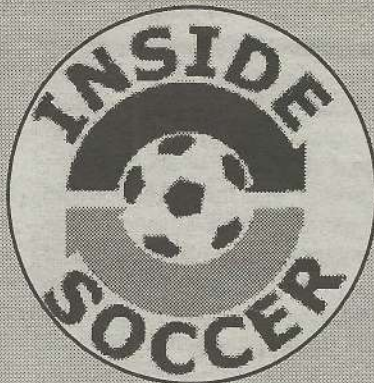
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Continued from front page

"I'd be playing it at Marathon Stadium, and that's it," he declared. "As far as I'm concerned the rules have always been the rules and it's just not fair to change them mid-season."

"If there are loopholes it's way out of order, because if we earn it the local people and the team deserve to have the game in their own back yard."

The once inconceivable possibility of either Newcastle or Wollongong earning dibs on the big game had likely not even been contemplated until recently, with both clubs now firmly entrenched near the top of the competition.

"I think it's a case of Newcastle and Wollongong are OK, but normally they fall away," explained Wolves general manager, Graham Haney.

"And all of a sudden maybe that's not going to happen this year."

Haney said it was "great news"

As recently as two weeks ago a Soccer Australia insider told me that both Wollongong and Newcastle had "no hope" of hosting a grand final.

"I do believe that we have the final say and so it would be played in Sydney," was the unofficial word.

Haney conceded to previously being resigned to Wollongong playing all but its first final in Sydney, but said the possibility of a south coast grand final was "great news" when 'Inside Soccer' revealed that the league might well consider playing a grand final in a major regional centre.

"Obviously the club would like to play a game like that in our home city," Haney said.

"I really thought that they'd just shunt us off to Parramatta Stadium as usual, so now we'll have to start considering our options."

Kamasz admitted that the final deci-

sion would still hinge on "finding venues to back us up commercially."

"At the end of the day there is a lot of money at stake and we have to weigh up optimizing our corporate opportunities against what is fair to the clubs who earn the right to a big final," he explained.

That cash-strapped Newcastle is one of the majority of NSL clubs which would likely accept the incentive of a guaranteed financial return in return for allowing the possibility of a grand final to go elsewhere, although that doesn't sit well with Sterrey, whose Breakers team is writing the season's most implausible fairy story.

Sterrey believes his club should go as far as to consider temporary seating at Breakers Stadium, rather than play even a single final at any other venue.

"Obviously I'd rather play all our games at home," said Sterrey, adding that he was already disappointed that the Breakers were negotiating the use of Marathon Stadium for all Newcastle's home finals.

"The club has actually been talking about this with the (ARL) Newcastle Knights this week, with the club even considering a move for the home and away semi finals."

"My feeling on this is that we'd pack our place to the rafters for a big final, but I'm not prepared to move from Birmingham Gardens for any reason, certainly not for our first home semi final."

The only guaranteed 'home' final for each of the six clubs competing in the play-offs comes during the dual-legged home and away opening games of the series.

Third plays sixth and fourth meets fifth in sudden-death elimination finals, with teams one and two going head-to-head to decide an automatic grand final berth and, at least historically, which city will host the big game.

NSL reform

It won't happen overnight, but it will happen!

By Aidan Ormond

Judging by Soccer Australia Chairman Basil Scarsella's comments, the reform agenda the SA board is keen to implement looks almost certain to happen at the start of the 2001/2002 season.

"No question about that," was Scarsella's response when it was put to him that it was odds on, given time is running out, that the proposed changes could not be pushed through in time for October 2000.

"We are going through a negotiation and consultation process," he said. "And as time goes by the harder it will be to implement the changes for the start of next season. It's virtually impossible."

The majority of NSL clubs support delaying of reforms, however Scarsella is quick to point out that reform will eventually happen, but not this year.

Soccer Australia is hopeful that most clubs will sign a document of intent regarding reform, although this would not automatically block any intended legal action by clubs.

IEC's Berti Mariani said their involvement with Soccer Australia was a partnership. "Obviously the corporates would like to see reform happen this year but Soccer Australia is doing

the right thing by consulting and negotiating. We've bought in on Soccer Australia's vision."

NSL executive spokesperson Tony Labbozzetta was happy with the negotiation process. "The matters on the agenda are being evaluated by the sub-committee which has NSL executive and SA board members under the chairpersonship of Cheryl Bart (independent).

"I would say confidently that there will be a restructuring of the league at some point. And we need to work hand in hand with IEC to help market the game. I am very happy that we have found a company that wants to enhance the game."

A delayed reform to the NSL may open the door for new conscripts, for instance Southern Sharks in Sydney and bids in Adelaide, to stake a claim for an NSL spot next season, although the SA board has not seen any formal bids.

It is a moot point whether the league could sustain a 17 or 18 team competition.

Soccer Australia will announce the composition of next season's NSL immediately after this year's June Grand Final, which may be played for the first time in a regional centre (see Greg Blake story.)



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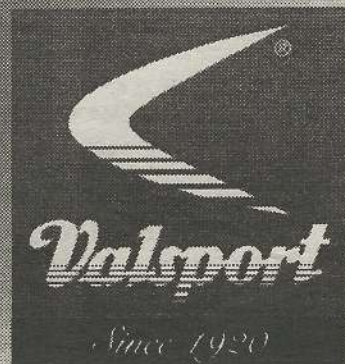
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STEVE LAYBUTT

Australian Soccer's 'next big thing' spoke with *Inside Soccer's* Roger Sleeman



By Roger Sleeman

They say one man's meat is another man's poison. In the case of Wollongong coach, Nick Theodorakopoulos, the decision to discard the current 'next big thing' of Australian football, Steve Laybutt, would surely leave him wondering how he could have made such a mistake.

Laybutt, on departing from the Wolves in 1997, played a few games for the Illawarra Lions in the NSW Super League before transferring to the Brisbane Strikers for the princely sum of \$100.

Despite the protests of the Lions, the Appeals Tribunal upheld the decision and Frank Farina signed the man who Gary Phillips, the QAS head coach, had recommended so highly.

In the past three seasons Laybutt has grown in stature, culminating in his elevation to the full Socceroo squad, and after his big game in Hungary the interest shown by European clubs has skyrocketed.

It's now a question of when, not if, Laybutt will depart our shores and commence his professional career in Europe.

In this interview with Roger Sleeman, Steve Laybutt discusses his career in Australian football, his experiences in the J league and his overwhelming desire to succeed professionally overseas.

ROGER SLEEMAN: Did you ever think you'd be on the shopping list of clubs like Middlesborough, Rangers and Southampton?

STEVE LAYBUTT When I was playing junior football and graduated to state representative status playing with Lucas Neill and Jacob Burns, I realised there could be a future in the game for me.

My experience at the AIS under Ron Smith and Steve O'Connor took me to new heights, enabling me to perform at a superior level in the NSL.

Naturally, as you graduate to higher

levels of competition, as I experienced in the J League, your confidence and ability grow.

I suppose the turning point was my performance in the game against Hungary and when you hear that a legend like Gordon McQueen has recommended you to Middlesborough it doesn't do your confidence any harm.

R.S. How much influence did Frank Farina and John Kosmina have on your development?

S.L. As a young player you obviously respect coaches who have played successfully overseas because they can draw on a wider experience than locally based coaches.

The fact that both Farina and Kosmina were exposed to the top level of overseas football also instilled a confidence in players. They're both 'players' coaches' who have been there and done it at the highest level for club and country and understand the motivation of players.

In particular I owe a lot to Farina who gave me the chance to play regularly in the NSL and for selecting me for the Socceroos.

I only hope I can justify my selection with some continuing good performances, although I won't be available for the Czech Republic match due to the Olyroo matches against Holland and Slovakia.

R.S. Which Australian players have you modelled your game on?

S.L. I can't say there are any. I looked up to some local players but I was never a great spectator of Australian football because my main occupation was with playing.

If you talk about model players, you need look no further than Marcel Desailly and Jap Staam, two of the finest man markers in world football.

R.S. Can you relate your experiences in the J League with Bellmare Hiratsuka, and how do you compare the standard of football in Japan with the NSL?

S.L. The club is one of the smaller clubs in the J League but the facilities were well ahead of Australian clubs.

We drew average crowds of 8-10,000 but the stadium was so small the atmosphere was electric as the supporters really get behind you.

The Japanese game is more technical than the NSL and the pace of the game is much quicker.

Although football still trails baseball in popularity, the game has made big inroads through the J League and the bigger clubs, supported by the major corporations, have large and fanatical support.

The standard of football is increasing rapidly and the final place obtained by the U/20 team in the last W.Y.C. in Nigeria, is only the start of their climb up the ladder of world football.

R.S. What impression of Australian football did the Japanese have?

S.L. Although the Australian game doesn't receive a lot of publicity in Japan, I was always questioned about the NSL. The fact that a number of J League teams have been coming to Australia for pre-season training over the last few years confirms their high opinion of our game.

After all I was signed by Bellmare while touring with the Olyroos in Japan last year.

With the improving standards of the Japanese game, there's certainly a message for Australia that we must seek even closer ties, especially in light of the huge success that is predicted for World Cup 2002.

R.S. Did you make a big sacrifice by returning from Japan to play for Parramatta Power?

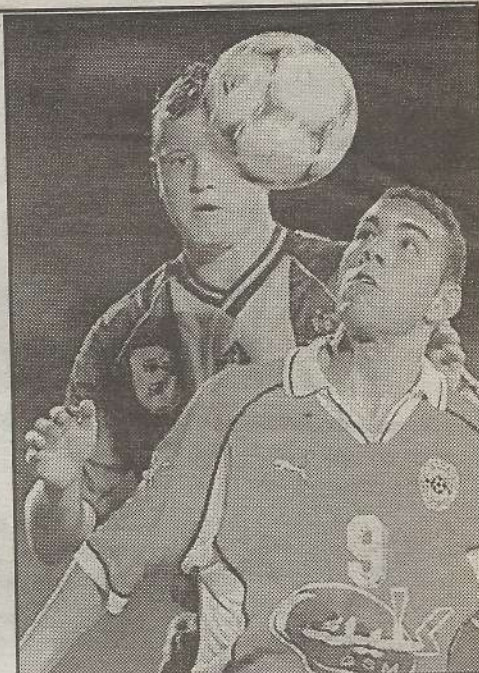
S.L. I would've been quite happy to stay in Japan and there were a couple of bigger clubs wanting my services.

The money was obviously much better in Japan and I was aware by coming back to the NSL, I could get into bad habits by playing at a lower level.

However, I had to think long term, and with my commitments for the Olyroos and Socceroos a major priority, a return to Australia was the logical decision to make.

In the back of my mind was also the possibility of a career in Europe and if I'd stayed in Japan that opportunity would've been delayed.

R.S. In terms of the Olyroo performance at the Four Nations Tournament in January, is Raul Blanco justified in claiming the team was underprepared, and



Steve Laybutt against the Egyptians in the Olyroo tournament in Adelaide in January.

but against South Korea we were outplayed by a team which was a class above us.

South Korean football has forged ahead in leaps and bounds but the big advantage the Koreans have is that most of the players are home based, which enables them to have maximum preparation and play a great number of matches.

In a perfect world all teams would have equal preparation but hopefully our matches against Slovakia and Holland will provide further valuable build-up for the Olympics.

R.S. How would you compare the standard of the Aussie squad which played in Chile with the team that played in Hungary, and do you think the Olyroos should've represented Australia in Chile?

S.L. The Chile tournament was obviously useful for some of the fringe players to press their claim for permanent places in the squad but without a doubt the team in Hungary was our best.

From my own standpoint playing with players of the quality of Vidmar and Moore at the back made me rise to the occasion and the goal I scored was a welcome bonus on the day.

As an Olyroo I would have to say that the 2000 squad should've represented Australia but I'm sure those players who were out to impress Frank Farina for the full national team in Chile would disagree.

R.S. After that great volley you scored against Gippsland most people wouldn't have been surprised if you'd left for Europe the next day with a video in your hand. How long will you be staying in Australia?

S.L. I would like to leave Australia as soon as possible. The truth is the NSL is a great launching pad for players but the game lacks atmosphere and passion.

If a player is really serious about a career in football, Europe is the only place to be.

Although there have been expressions of interest from the three British clubs and from Germany, France and Holland there's nothing definite in the pipeline.

It's pretty critical that I perform well in the two Olyroo matches.

The biggest obstacle to playing in Britain is a work permit as I discovered three years ago when I had trials.

If I can't obtain a work permit I'd be happy to play in one of the other countries and preferably a club which can guarantee first team football and has ambitions to go places.

sleeman1@one.net.au

Laybutt, on departing from the Wolves in 1997, played a few games for the Illawarra Lions in the NSW Super League before transferring to the Brisbane Strikers for the princely sum of \$100.

what was your feeling about the squad's performance?

S.L. Earlier in our campaign against Brazil and Japan the squad played well but the biggest problem is getting players from Europe together on a regular basis.

Also some of these players have just gone to Europe and aren't playing first team football week in and week out.

Consequently, it's hard to gel as a team when players aren't selected regularly in their clubs and the squad isn't playing enough matches.

Against an under-strength Nigeria and Egypt, the team performed creditably

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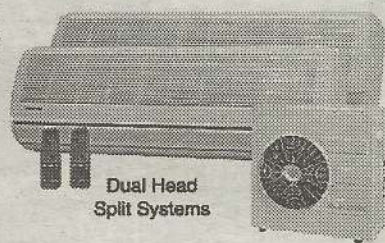
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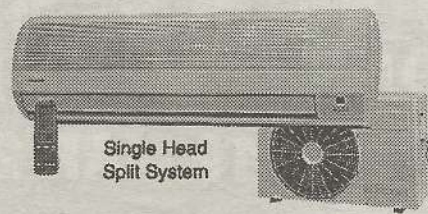
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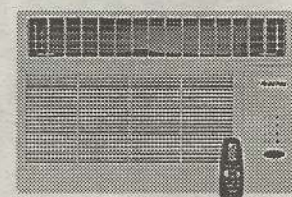
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GREG BLAKE
C7 SOCCER COMMENTATOR
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Great first-hand gossip from a top mate, although again from the no-names, no-pack drill file.

Freeloading informant was dining as a guest of one exceptionally high-profile newcomer on the local scene recently, with some generous consumption of a bottle of truth serum having the desired effect.

Already a controversy magnet though no fault of his own, said player was quite expansive in his appraisal of his own (lack of) fitness, his (lack of) interest in actually playing in the (ha, ha) local comp and just how much he was enjoying his

and then daylight.

It seems that the current season does not boast any broadly accepted medal favorites (see separate story elsewhere in this issue), with a personal straw poll of a group of NSL players throwing up quite a mixed bag of possible winners - and plenty of quizzical shoulder shrugs.

Olympic has a standout list but Pablo Cardozo aside; it appears not too many popular choices.

These days it's fashionable to talk of Newcastle and Wollongong, thus the obvious suspects like Matty Horsley and even dear old Andy Harper got a mention or two.

Yet there is also some interest in Shane Pryce, Andy Roberts, newcomer Stuart Young and David Cervinski, who is getting the best profile of his career despite being an outstanding achiever in a string of grand final teams during the 1990s.

Plenty of interest in Perth's Con Boutsianis, although several players from that club are considered contenders while one-third of Carlton's 'Brit-pack', big Dave McPherson, has earned some admirers.

Clint Bolton, Michael Curcija, Dominic Longo and Jacob Burns all got at least a couple of strong recommendations but, as I said, this is probably the most open field in recent memory - it may come down to which players really grab the headlines in the closing rounds of the season.

At this stage it's still double-figure odds the field.

It's all about attitude, according to one Newcastle Breakers insider who spent a good slab of time marking time when the club was spinning its wheels in the mud.

"At one point I think we actually believed we weren't good enough; that as players we were born losers," he says.

"Where once we'd go out for a game I think secretly hoping we just wouldn't get flogged, these days the feeling is totally different.

"I don't think there has been a game this season when we haven't gone out believing we would win, that we can beat

anybody on a given day."

Not sure it's relevant to anything - indeed good judges might successfully argue that it is consistent with just about everything written this column - but I reckon it would have to be a first that after round 24 the top eleven teams in the competition all boasted a positive goal difference.

Any amateur maths analysts care to theorize?

Big night in Canberra last Tuesday, with all-star veteran Robbie Hooker (right) becoming only the ninth player in NSL history to reach the 350 game milestone, while his Cosmos boss, Tom Sermanni, celebrated his 50th match as an NSL coach.

With Lubo Lapsansky playing his 150th NSL match Carlton spoiled the occasion by winning 2-0, one of the goals coming from 50-gamer, Alex Moreira.

However the only stat that concerned Carlton boss, Stuart Munro, was his team's first win in five weeks and a resultant clamber back into the top six.

Gotta give the big 'Moose', Vlado Vanis (left), big Brownie points for having the courage of his convictions in his own coaching methods.

At a club not renowned for its patience or tolerance the Melbourne Knights boss showed a ton of guts to drag drawcard 'guest' player, Peter Beardsley, out of the contest just one hour into Beardsley's home debut for the Knights recently.

That Beardsley's cameo for the club had cost a penny or two and dragged a ground record 11,415 fans through the Somers Street turnstiles mattered not to the 'Moose', who was then suitably rewarded for his decision by watching South Melbourne slam home three late goals and power to a resounding 4-0 road win.

Ouch!

Just on the 'Moose', Newcastle boss Lee Sterrey was looking forward to catching up with the former Knights grand final star upon the Melbourne club's visit to Birmingham Gardens at the weekend.

"I'm just wondering what he'll say when I ask him to set up the cones," said Sterrey, who last week was named as our 'Inside Soccer' coach of the month, with Vanis nominated as his assistant.



Perhaps this offers some insight into David Lowe's contribution to the Breakers this season?

Perhaps synonymous with Adelaide Farce's near complete job of de-glossing (or is that un-glossing?) of Damian Mori's night of record-breaking ten sleeps ago was what appeared to be a very disappointing quote attributed to veteran coach, Zoran Matic.

In the build-up to the historic game against Sydney United Matic was quoted as suggesting that Mori was "the only person thinking about the record", intimating that neither he nor anyone at the club gave a stuff about 'Frogga's remarkable achievement.

Not so, with the interpretation offered that Matic merely wanted to maintain his team's focus on what was a must-win game and diminish the focus on Mori, who is still very much Farce's main goalscoring threat.

Two big ticks for Zoran, with his Croweaters running up a 4-0 win on the back of a couple of strikes which earned Mori his own chapter in the history books.

The stench of death wafting through the place whenever soccer has been played there in recent years tells the story, but surely the final test of Melbourne's Olympic Park as a regular venue will come in the final few weeks of the current season.

At best it is likely only one Victorian club will even make the finals cut this season - either South Melbourne or Carlton - and the race will probably be decided at the 44-year old venue when the vagaries of this season's stupid fixture list bring the two clubs together in rounds 30 and 32, both in designated Carlton home games.

Local derby games, the stakes huge and both games virtual mini-elimination finals, if both matches don't draw 10,000-plus crowds perhaps we will finally stop persisting with a venue which was rejected by the punters a decade ago.

Sure, it's not the end of the world, but just for the record of the stringer who once again appears dedicated to making it up as he goes along, South Melbourne were actually in the top six for most of November and didn't, as it was breathlessly announced, "climb into the top six for the first time this season" after trashing the Knights last week.

A little bit of research never went astray.

grblake@primus.com.au



"well-paid vacation."

For the sake of the people filling his wallet, let's hope it was just the grog talking.

By this time last season the race to find a probable Warren Medal winner was already just about run and won, with media and players alike all talking Brad Maloney

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Kalogeracos off to Norway?

By Brett Klucznik

Vas Kalogeracos has returned to Perth after a brief stint in Greece with second division club Ioannina. But the former Glory striker, who scored 22 goals in 60 outings for the club, says he won't be staying long in his hometown as he's planning a career in Europe and is currently waiting to hear about a possible move to join Valerenga in Norway.

"I was in Athens for about two-and-a-half weeks and I got sick of waiting so I came home to get fit. But I won't be hanging around for too long," he said.

Kalogeracos has joined his former club Floreat Athena on a short-term contract but he's aiming to extend his career in Europe having got over the disappointment of being dumped by Glory last November.

"In the end it was the best thing for me," said the nippy forward. "I'm happy with what I've been doing and I'll be even happier when I'm with another club."

Perth Glory has turned down a AU\$1 million bid for midfielder Ivan Ergic because the 19-year-old does not want to leave the club.

While the source of the offer is being kept secret, it is believed to have come from a European agent representing a club in Germany. A Scottish Premier League side - believed to be Glasgow

Celtic - is also monitoring Ergic's progress after one of its officials watched him in action against Northern Spirit in January.

Overseas interest in the midfielder has blossomed since Bernd Stange spoke with internet news site Football365 in January.

The Glory coach said that he rated Ergic as one of the best young players he has ever seen.

"In 25 years of coaching at the highest level in Germany only Ulf Kirsten and Matthias Sammer have been this good. I can't teach him anything! He's very, very exciting."

"Believe me, I'm sure he will be gone from here in the next few months. All the agents are here already and soon our stands will be filled with coaches from half of Europe's biggest clubs," said Stange.

But Ergic is keen to stay in Perth and see out his contract with Glory before trying to break into the European market.

"Ivan knows he still has a lot to learn and believes he can do it best under our coaches," club GM Roger Lefort said.

"It's our belief that some youngsters go overseas too soon. Ivan doesn't want to make that mistake."

And Lefort has congratulated the club's fans, saying that they have showed how much they are a part of Perth Glory with their passionate support for the team.

The praise comes hot on the heels of

the huge backlash of Bernd Stange's 'sacking' a few weeks ago which saw well over 500 letters, phone calls, faxes and e-mails received at the club's offices.

"We have always recognised and acknowledged what an integral part of Perth Glory the fans are," Mr Lefort said, "and we realise how fortunate we are to get 11,000-plus supporters to every home game."

The management of the club fully understands the disappointment and frustration of the crowd when it was first announced Bernd's contract wouldn't be renewed and we sympathise with those supporters," he added.

With well-publicised threats of boycotts, pitch invasions and all sorts of protests, Lefort admitted the club were more than a bit concerned that feelings might have spilt over at the Canberra match.

But he was full of praise for the supporters, saying the way they conducted themselves was a credit to Perth Glory and soccer in general.

"The club was very pleased the supporters didn't extend their frustrations onto the pitch and cause any disruption to events on the field," he said.

"They acted very responsibly and we hope that with the announcement that Bernd will remain with Perth Glory, they can now continue to concentrate their efforts on getting behind the team 100 per cent, as they always do."

With all definitely not forgiven nor forgotten by the fans over the way their beloved coach was 'dismissed', Lefort said that by showing their support for the team and protesting the decision in the manner they did, the Glory's fans con-



Vas Kalogeracos: back in Perth before yet another move?

firmed to the rest of the league what everyone associated with the club already knew.

"Many times people have quoted them (the Glory fans) as being the best fans in the land - they've just proved that once again," he said.

Bernd Stange (far left) has expressed concern over his sides' ability to stay competitive for the entire game in the lead-up to the NSL finals, something which he puts down to having to train and play in the sweltering Perth summer heat.

"The last three or four games we started very aggressively but we didn't have the power for 90 minutes of soccer," the former East German national coach said.

To compensate for Perth's summer temperatures Stange has been forced to reduce the number and length of training sessions in order for players to have extra time to recuperate between training, home games and flights to the eastern states.

Who is the new team member?

See the New Power Team Member in action for the first time!

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AUSSIES on the world stage

A round-up of how our Aussies players fared abroad this last week ...

Steve Corica for J-League

Skilful Queenslander and Australian international Steve Corica is headed to the J-League team Hiroshima Sanfrecce.

The Japanese club would be well versed with Corica's talents as the head coach is former Australina national team manager, Eddie Thompson.

Corica would feel at home in Hiroshima with Tony Popovic and Hayden Foxe part of the improving team who are gearing up for the start of the J-League this month.

Another former Glory player, midfielder Michael Garcia is planning to kick-start his career by teaming up with former teammate Tony Carbone at Marine Castle United in Singapore, reports Brett Kluznick.

Having spent much of the past three years dodging injury, Garcia hopes that the spell will bring him to the attention of Olyroo coach Raul Blanco.

"I'm determined to get back into the squad and make the Olympics," he said. "To play in the games would be fantastic - and it would be a great shop window for my career with the rest of the world looking on."

Garcia, who has joined Marine Castle on a short-term contract, is planning to join English club Barnsley in July for pre-season training.

He had a promising spell with the club last September but returned to Perth at the request of club management in order to fully recover from a string of injuries which included ruptured ankle ligaments and a trapped nerve.

Barnsley is keen to sign the 22-year old on the proviso that he can prove he has overcome injury.

Harry Kewell was the star hit of the

Aussies Abroad in the last week as he majestically led his Leeds side into the quarter finals of the UEFA Cup after scoring the winner in a 1-0 home win over Roma.

Kewell had the many scouts from across Europe drooling with yet another glittering performance which will have sent his value soaring.

The Australian international striker is already rated in the £20million bracket but it is a figure which the mega-rich sides of Serie A and the Primera Liga are unlikely to balk at.

In the Roma game Kewell scored in the 67th minute when Lee Bowyer picked up a loose ball and fed the Aussie sensation who, with a delightful shimmy, sidestepped the challenge of Damiano Tommasi, then cracked his drive which Francesco Antonioli could only push into the roof of the net for his 12th goal of the season.

Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale has promised to open the bank vaults in his endeavour to keep Kewell at Leeds and is likely to have to fend off a host of enquiries from the plethora of Italian and Spanish sides who are certain to tempt Kewell away from Yorkshire with the lure of the lire and the pull of the peseta.

In the mid-week Champions Cup game it was an uneventful time for all the Aussies playing with clubs still in the competition.

Joe Simunic is still injured so he was missing from the Hertha Berlin side that lost 1-0 away to Sparta Prague, while both Paul Okon and Mark Bosnich remained on the bench as their respective sides, Fiorentina and Manchester United, played their games.

In the weekend English Premier

League Kewell was absent due to suspension as Leeds had 1-2 win away to Bradford in one of the two Sunday games.

Mark Schwarzer also played on Sunday and made several important saves to keep his side in the game that went down to the wire but ended up with a Middlesbrough win 2-1 at home to title chasing Arsenal.

In other games Bosnich's up and down season with United was back on the up as he returned to the first team line-up following Raimond Van Der Gouw's less than perfect performance in the Champions Cup game against Bordeaux. Bosnich made some good saves as United won 3-1 at home to Derby.

Richard Johnson was back in the Watford line-up but wasn't able to help his side to a change of fortune as they succumbed to a 1-0 defeat away to Newcastle. He was replaced in the 87th minute as Watford fell further behind in the bottom place, six points adrift of second last Sheffield Wednesday.

It was a busy week for the Aussies in the Nationwide Division One as two full rounds were played over the last week.

In midweek Stan Lazaridis sustained an injury and was replaced at half time as Birmingham beat Portsmouth 1-0 to continue to mount a challenge for the top spots in the division. Lazaridis' injury prevented him from participating in his team's 2-1 loss away to Tranmere Rovers on the weekend.

In other Division One games both Frank Talia and Jason Kearton were in goals as both of their struggling teams had good home wins midweek.

Talia was also in goal as Swindon had another victory on the weekend while Kearton was the Crewe 'keeper when they played Blackburn.

The Aussies at Crystal Palace didn't have a happy week with only Nick Rizzo making a 79th minute appearance in his team's 0-0 home draw on Tuesday. Neither he nor the injured Craig Foster had any playing time in the weekend's 0-1 away win over Norwich.

Wolverhampton had an up and down week with a 1-0 loss away to Grimsby in midweek but they bounced back on the weekend to beat second placed Ipswich 2-1. Kevin Muscat played the full 90 minutes in both games while the Japan bound Steve Corica was absent for both.

Shaun Murphy was at the heart of Sheffield United's defence in both of his team's high scoring games as they drew 3-3 mid-week at home to Barnsley and won 2-3 away to Port Vale on the weekend.

Both Jason Van Blerk and Andrew McDermott were in the West Brom starting line-up for both of their games - a 2-0 home win over Tranmere and a 0-1 away win over Stockport on the weekend. McDermott, who is desperate to break back into the Olyroo squad, was replaced in the 61st minute of the second game.

It was a very unhappy week for promotion chasing Manchester City as they suffered two defeats. In the midweek 1-3 home defeat by Queens Park Rangers Danny Tiatto was replaced in the 69th minute while he played the full game in the weekend's 2-1 away loss to Barnsley.

In Division Two Millwall's Aussie Tim Cahill has had a sensational week with three goals in his team's two games during the week.

In the mid-week 1-2 home loss to Scunthorpe Cahill scored the goal in the 22nd minute while he scored both goals,



J-League bound: Wolverhampton's Steve Corica.

in the 18th and 38th minutes, in the 0-2 away win on the weekend - Cahill has now scored 11 goals this season.

Fellow Aussie Lucas Neill played full games and received a yellow card in both matches.

Danny Allsopp's loan move to Wrexham has had a change of fortune. He scored again in the mid-week 0-2 away win at Brentford but the former South and Carlton striker was rocked by the news he is likely to miss the rest of the season with a serious knee ligaments injury.

In Scotland Old Firm clash midweek Rangers virtually secured another championship when they had a 0-1 away win over Celtic. All three Aussies, Mark Viduka, Craig Moore and Tony Vidmar, played the full game while Celtic's Viduka went into the game seeking to establish a Scottish Premier League record of scoring in 11 consecutive matches, but it was not to be his or his team's night.

It was better game for Viduka in the weekend's 4-1 win over St Johnstone as he claimed his 26th and 27th goals of a prolific campaign and it is difficult to see a stronger contender than Viduka for Scotland's Player of the Year.

In Sunday's Scottish Cup quarter final Craig Moore played the full game but Tony Vidmar was out with a groin strain as Rangers beat Heart 4-1.

The Aussies have hit a purple patch in Germany with most of them playing full games for their respective teams on the weekend.

Both Ned Zelic and Paul Agostino (for the second week) played the 90 minutes of 1860 Munchen's 2-2 away draw at Arminia Bielefeld with Zelic receiving a yellow card.

In Bayer Leverkusen's 4-1 win over Wolfsburg Frank Juric is making the most of his opportunity after the injury to the home team's first choice 'keeper with his third straight appearance.

The other two Aussies in the Bundesliga, Joe Simunic and David Zdrilic, were both absent from their team's games due to injury.

In Italy Serie A Paul Okon again remained on the bench as Fiorentina lost an away game 1-0.

In the Serie B Marco Bresciano had the same experience as Empoli was thrashed 2-5 at home to Pistoiese but fellow Olyroo Vince Grella played a full game as Ternana drew 1-1 away to Cesena.

In Holland Zeljko Kalac was the 'keeper as Roda JC had another good win, 4-1 over Sparta.

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Warren Medal needs better voting system

Greg Blake comments

At the risk of offending the players' association and probably every player who tugs on a boot in the NSL, I believe it's time for a re-think on the evaluation process to decide the winner of the prestigious Warren Medal, awarded to the NSL player of the year. On one hand the medal has come to be regarded as prestigious simply because it is voted for by the players themselves, with a string of recent winners publicly acknowledging the medal's value to them because the accolade is bestowed by his peers.

Which is positive, because in the seasons before the players had a hands-on role in deciding the player of the year, actually winning it was often regarded about as well as a bilious attack.

But I would also suggest that the credibility of the Warren Medal is equally as questionable in its current incarnation, with possibly many of the players themselves voting in relative ignorance on their end-of-year ballot form.

After all, they only see opposition clubs at first hand two or three times per season - which is probably less than the average fan - and there is an over-reliance on word of mouth.

Most opinion is media-driven anyway, with players relying on print and electronic media to formulate their overall views - and that is only presuming that they even scrutinize what is written and

said at all.

And I have no doubt personalities do come into it.

While they are rare enough, there are some totally annoying dickheads playing in the NSL and it wouldn't matter how flash they are as players, they wouldn't get close to getting the nod by opposition players - or teammates for that matter.

And would you vote for anyone who might have raked his studs over your ankle once or twice in a game, regardless of how good the player is?

Paradoxically, while the media probably significantly influences opinion, there is no way it could be trusted to decide the award. The refs had their chance to do the job between 1977 and 1988, during which time the credentials of a couple of winners of player of the year honours were, well, questionable at best.

We've been blessed in recent years, with a string of obvious favourites winning the Warren Medal, but season 1999/2000 has provided no such luxury.

That votes must be cast long before the finals series is run and won has always struck me as particularly ludicrous anyway, with the play-offs always the ultimate test of any player's genuine claims to greatness.

That silly concept, combined with the mere fact that every potential voter will this year be asked to recall and evaluate the form over the course of the

longest NSL regular season ever this year, will further cloud the clarity of decision-making.

Thus no matter how well intentioned some of the voters might be, the current method of evaluating the competition's highest individual award is certainly debatable and not nearly as credible as the players' union might like to think.

There have been several alternate options suggested, although I tend to like the idea that only the most senior of NSL players - with each NSL club represented - are involved in the voting process (with age, games played in the NSL, games played in the relevant season and an expression of interest all essential for earning the right to cast a vote.)

The criteria ensures a degree of maturity in the decision-making process, expertise in and working knowledge of the subject matter and, critically, a genuine interest in actually undertaking the task of putting the medal around the most deserving neck.

The value of the Warren Medal - named after the original 'Captain Soccerroo', Johnny Warren - should never be cheapened by deciding a recipient based on ill-informed guesswork.

It's reasonable that the responsibility is with the players' association, but even they should want to be certain that in such an open season as this one that the decision made by their members is an informed, fair and accurate one.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"Everyone is half decent when I'm drunk."
Melbourne Knights' Mark Silic on his ideal woman.
"The weekend of March 4th and 5th saw the holding of the 6th annual Wagga Ancient Flatulence Masters Cup."
Nick Guoth reporting. We'll leave the readers to make their own 'played in windy conditions' gags.
"It (having a few days off training) happened when I was playing in Europe when we were underachieving ... we came back fresher and started winning games."
A prescient Graham Arnold. A rejuvenated Spirit beat Marconi on Friday.
"Rados went down in a screaming heap in a performance that would have made Tom Cruise proud."
Newcastle reporter Michael Kmet on the acting potential of Knights player Slavko Rados.
"North (Jade) still suffers from the Scheinflug factor where wingbacks are instructed to undertake a safety first approach to the position."
Strikers coach John Kosmina tells it like it is.

NSL TOP SCORERS:

MICHAEL CURCIJA (South Melbourne)	16
PABLO CARDOZO (SO)	15
CON BOUTSIANIS (PG)	13
DAMIAN MORI (ACF)	12
ALEX MOREIRA (C)	12
STUART YOUNG (WC)	12

CROWD COMPARISON:

Cumulative to Round 24

99/00: 1,030,219

98/99: 992,598

Fixture changes:

*Please note that the Marconi Stallions and Perth Glory game in Sydney will be played on Good Friday April 21 Kick-off 6pm (in place of the original Easter Saturday)



NSL match reports and analysis follows on the next eight pages

	(Overall)							(Home)							(Away)						
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	25	14	5	6	47	27	47	20	7	4	1	30	13	7	1	5	17	14			
Wollongong Wolves	25	13	7	5	54	35	46	19	9	1	3	29	17	4	6	2	25	18			
Perth Glory	24	13	7	4	46	31	46	15	8	3	2	29	19	5	4	2	17	12			
Newcastle Breakers	25	12	7	6	35	29	43	6	7	4	2	24	16	5	3	4	11	13			
Carlton	25	11	6	8	39	29	39	10	6	4	3	19	12	5	2	5	20	17			
Marconi Stallions	25	11	6	8	34	31	39	3	6	2	4	15	14	5	4	4	19	17			
South Melbourne	24	10	5	9	38	36	35	2	7	2	3	23	12	3	3	6	15	24			
Brisbane Strikers	25	9	6	10	33	31	33	2	5	4	3	22	13	4	2	7	11	18			
Parramatta Power	24	9	5	10	40	36	32	4	5	4	3	21	15	4	1	7	19	21			
Football Kingz	23	9	5	9	39	41	32	-2	4	3	3	16	16	5	2	6	23	25			
Adelaide Force	24	8	7	9	33	27	31	6	6	3	3	24	13	2	4	6	9	14			
Northern Spirit	25	9	3	13	29	42	30	-13	6	2	5	16	19	3	1	8	13	23			
Melbourne Knights	25	8	6	11	28	43	30	-15	5	2	5	13	14	3	4	6	15	29			
Gippsland Falcons	25	6	7	12	16	30	25	-14	3	3	6	9	13	3	4	6	7	17			
Canberra Cosmos	25	5	7	13	30	47	22	-17	3	3	6	13	15	2	4	7	17	32			
Sydney United	25	3	5	17	15	41	14	-26	3	3	8	12	20	0	2	9	3	21			

South Melbourne v Adelaide City Force playing 5th April.



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Stallions bring best out in Spirit

NORTHERN SPIRIT 2

Babic o.g. 8, Seal pen. 44

MARCONI STALLIONS 1

Invincible 83

Friday night at North Sydney Oval, Sydney. Crowd 4,384.



MATCH STATS:



NORTHERN SPIRIT: P Henderson, M Rudan, P Bilokapic, R Enes, M Cunico, T Cranney, M Langdon, R Slater, N Berti (I Crook 73), T

Perinich (S Catanzaro 61), D Seal (A Griffiths 83).



MARCONI STALLIONS: M Turnbull, C Gibson, M Smith, M Babic, D Longo, V Zoric, B Farah, D Invincible, C

Care (B Renaud 64), H Karl (A Duric 75), F Awaritife (K Trajanovski 78).

Yellows:

Spirit: Troy Cranney 15, Mark Rudan 28.

Stallions: Mike Smith 9, Chad Gibson 44, Harry Karl 55, Buddy Farah 83.

Red Card:

Spirit: Paul Bilokapic 78

Best Players:

3. **ROBBIE SLATER (SPIRIT)**
2. Francis Awaritife (Stallions)
1. Chad Gibson (Stallions)

Referee: Matthew Breeze

By Paul Goodwin

Northern Spirit regained some respect from their long-suffering supporters when they defeated an unlucky Marconi 2-1 at Spirit Park on Friday night.

There were six changes from the Northern Spirit side which had scraped together a heroic 1-0 win against visitors Marconi earlier in the season, with two of the substitutes from that game getting a start and another of the previous starters appearing on the bench for this game.

Yet the changed combination worked just as effectively and the home side managed to again get away with the points, the third time that they have done so in as many league matches at North Sydney against the Stallions, who have yet to win at the ground in four appearances.

Indeed, this time the visitors managed their first goal, but it was to prove too little too late.

Spirit came out firing and with their vocal Bob Stand supporters at their backs they strung together some good moves and looked the part as they often do at the start of their games.

When diminutive wing back Matthew Langdon threaded a ball through from well outside the penalty area, after only eight minutes, Marconi stopper Mark Babic, no doubt labouring in the slippery conditions, wrong footed his keeper Michael Turnbull by sticking out a leg to intercept the ball, succeeding only in diverting it into the net past his helpless young team-mate.

Nothing really went right for Marconi in this game, but there was no questioning their effort or skill, merely the breaks did

not go their way on this occasion.

Northern Spirit almost got off the mark four minutes earlier when David Seal played a quick free kick into the area. Nicola Berti made a smart run to meet the advancing keeper and attempt a lob which clipped the crossbar before going over the top.

It was an early warning sign for the visitors.

Soon after taking the lead and with Spirit pressing for further goals sweeper Robbie Enes hit a low shot which whistled past the upright.

Three minutes later, at the other end, Chad Gibson, the long shot specialist, rocked the crossbar with a fierce drive from a free kick, with Paul Henderson clearly beaten.

Spirit striker David Seal was then the man to tidy up after a mad scramble to reach a loose ball in the goalmouth, following on from a Marconi free kick in the 28th minute.

Henderson was also fortunate, a minute later, when attempting to claim a high ball near the edge of his area when referee Matthew Breeze ruled that he was impeded and awarded his side a free kick.

Marconi had a fine chance to draw level in the 39th when Harry Karl found Francis Awaritife free on the right and with only Henderson to beat. 'Hendo' sensed the danger quickly and raced off his line to smother the ball, clearly saving the day for the home side.

Three minutes later Awaritife could have scored again when Enes inexplicably played a square ball across the face of his own penalty area, well short of any Spirit players, right in the path of the Marconi striker.

With time to spare Awaritife elected to shoot on sight, when he could have virtually walked the ball into the net from much closer range, the ball going inches wide of the left post, with the keeper well beaten.

Then, as the first half was drawing to a close, Tony Perinich raced onto a ball from out wide on the left and found both Buddy Farah and Turnbull advancing to meet him.

The two Marconi players appeared to be involved in a defensive mix up and in their confusion Farah up-ended Perinich who in the process earned his side a penalty.

Seal sent the keeper the wrong way with a perfectly executed spot kick.

It was a second goal at just the right time to give Spirit some breathing space after their lucky escapes earlier in the first half.

The second period began with long range shots from Gibson and Spirit's Michael Cunico both going wide and a smart cross from the left by Berti going begging.

Cunico provided Seal with a good pass inside the area in the 62nd and after a very good turn Seal's effort skimmed onto and then over the bar.

The game took a new turn when Paul Bilokapic was sent off for a reckless challenge on Danny Invincible on the touchline at the half way line in the 78th minute.

The clattering tackle from behind looked unnecessary and more than just

clumsy. The game had some strong tackling early on, with Mike Smith and Troy Cranney mixing it for a fair passage of time, but had settled down after the initial half an hour or so.

This dismissal showed that Mr Breeze would not tolerate any more such behaviour in a game between two sides which have featured in a number of rugged encounters since they first came together last season.

Within five minutes of the send-off, a rejuvenated Marconi exploited some gaps in the Spirit defence to find substitute Alex Duric out wide on the left. Duric crossed simply and effectively to the centre where two Spirit defenders guarded the goal, but neither could pick up Invincible who darted between them and found the gap nicely to head home easily.

The game was then set up for a barnstorming finish.

In the 86th Gibson's low drive was going wide, but when Babic stuck out a foot, no doubt hoping to again divert the ball into the net, but this time at his opponents' end, he missed the connection by a whisker and Henderson breathed again.

A furious period of play ensued as the clock wound down, Henderson saving his side with a swift piece of anticipation to smother the danger of Gibson at the far post, who was about to converge on yet another telling cross.

Once again Spirit proved Marconi's nemesis and upset the form book.

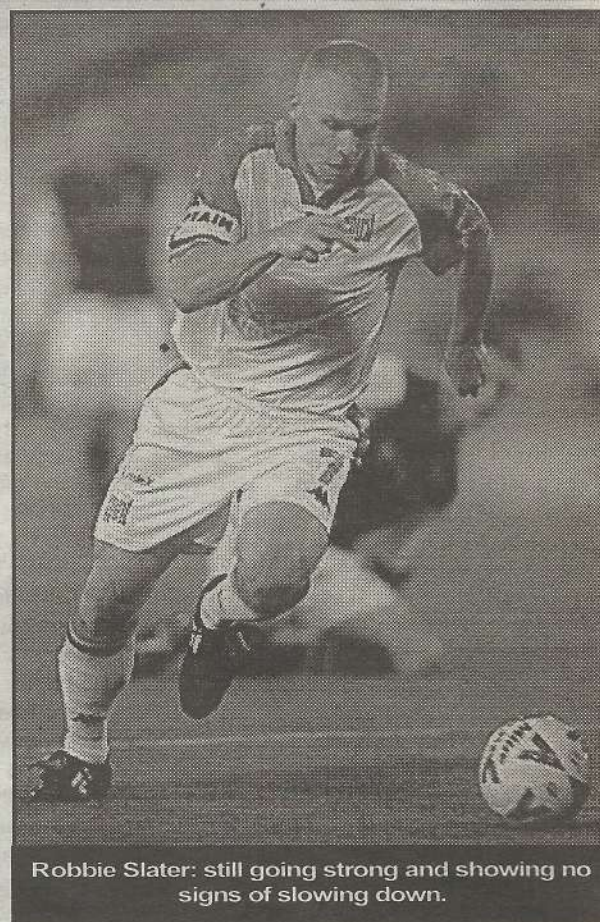
Despite playing poorly in recent weeks Northern Spirit's home record has been fair, with only one loss in its last seven games at Spirit Park, a statistic which may surprise some regulars.

The game was played in steady drizzle on a steamy evening and many people stayed away, partly due to the weather which began to close in an hour before the game and more probably because of some ordinary performances in recent weeks.

Maybe this result will bring them back again next time?

After the game Spirit coach Graham Arnold praised Marconi for yet again bringing the best out of his erratic side.

"If we put in that effort every week we wouldn't be in our present situation,"



Robbie Slater: still going strong and showing no signs of slowing down.

Arnold said.

"Maybe we have to give Marconi some credit because we seem to lift ourselves every time we play them."

"The rivalry between the clubs seems to bring out the best in my players more than other teams."

Marconi coach Eddie Krncevic was unhappy about the number of cards issued and also the penalty decision.

"From what I was told, Buddy Farah got the ball and Perinich went over the top, so I'm a bit disappointed," he said.

"But at the end of the day I'm proud of the way the boys played, because I thought we played extremely well."

Spirit coach Arnold also described Bilokapic's tackle as "stupid" and had no complaints about the send off.

"I wouldn't have liked to have been the striker on the end of it," Arnold said.

The Marconi side played well, were without skipper Brad Maloney who took a knock at training during the week and was not risked. Also out was Sean Babic who, the coach said, had been out of form.

Spirit expect to welcome back Matthew Bingley from injury in time for the Kingz match, welcome news with the loss of Bilokapic.

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Breakers' timely wake-up call

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 0

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1

Wilson og 76

Friday night at Breakers Stadium, Newcastle. Crowd 4,581.



MATCH STATS



NEWCASTLE BREAKERS: Catlin, Pryce, Roberts, McManus (Trpcevski 80), Sprod, Dodd, Wilson (Angieski 80), Wiecezorek, Owens (Tomich 65), Harper.



MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: John, Kovacevic, Rajher (Pelikan 74), Vukadin, Silic (Rados 69), Nasteviski, Kelic, Magdic, Kiratzoglou, Susa, Vargas.

Yellows:

Breakers: Pryce 90.

Knights: Rajher 19, Nasteviski 34, Vukadin 36, Silic 65.

Reds:

Breakers: Harper 89.

BEST PLAYER

3. RODRIGO VARGAS (KNIGHTS)

2 Andy Harper (Breakers)

1 Alex Kiratzoglou (Knights)

Referee: Brian Precious

Newcastle who could not find any rhythm on a wet surface and the whistle-happy performance of the referee did not make the game flow.

The second half was worse for the Breakers as an own goal through an unlucky header by Mark Wilson sealed their fate.

Also, veteran striker Andy Harper was sent off with minutes to go after being reported by the fourth official for an alleged elbow on substitute Slavko Rados.

Rados went down in a screaming heap in a performance that would have made Tom Cruise proud.

Harper, along with Shane Pryce, Glenn Sprod and Todd McManus, were standouts in a team that were carrying too many passengers on the night. The Breakers looked lethargic and uninspired.

For the Melbourne Knights, defender Rodrigo Vargas and keeper Martin John were inspirational at the back, while the talented Mark Silic and Alex Kiratzoglou were the shining lights in the midfield.

The game starting in embarrassing fashion for the Knights when they had to borrow the Breakers youth team's away strip when there was a colour clash. The prospect of a \$1000 fine and the game being televised on C7 should give their management a wake-up call. This is a basic error that even most local teams don't make.

Putting that aside the Knights went about their business in shutting out the Breakers by defending and defending, giving the Breakers very few chances in a half that only created two.

Thirty minutes had passed before Newcastle was any threat on the Melbourne goal.

Left back Glenn Sprod, starved of any action, went down the right hand side of the Newcastle wing in search of the ball. Sprod put in a wicked curling cross that found Johnny Buonavoglia at the far post - Buonavoglia's header shaded the goal post with Todd McManus centimetres away in meeting this header.

The Breakers dominated possession as the half progressed and there was a period where a string of over twenty passes was counted. However, possession doesn't equate to goals, as the Breakers could not pierce a solid Melbourne defence. It was hard to believe that the Knights have the second worst defensive record this year.

As the game struck the forty-five minute mark it was Andy "The General" Roberts who nearly broke the deadlock.

A cross from Brad Wiecezorek on the left drifted to Andy Roberts on the far post who came very late and deceived the Melbourne defence. Roberts met the ball with a fierce right foot volley but forced an outstanding save from Martin John.

Should Roberts have scored this goal it would have been his third in the 45th minute this year.

The halftime break did little to change the state of play - in fact, the Knights became more defensive. The

Breakers were forced to shoot from long range as a great thirty-yard drive from Glenn Sprod forced another terrific save from John. Minutes later a Wiecezorek drive from a similar position went wide.

Tragedy struck the Breakers in the 76th minute. One of the few forays at the opposite end of the park by the Knights won them a corner. An innocuous corner by Slavko Rados flicked the head of Mark Wilson deceiving a charging Bob Catlin much to the joy of the Melbourne Knights.

The Breakers now chased the game, but it was only a header by Harper straight to John that posed any threat of an equaliser.

The Breakers' woe was completed when Harper was sent off late in the game. Harper reacted to a vicious tackle by Rados, which was waved play-on by referee Brian Precious. A frustrated Harper chased Rados ten yards and followed through with his elbow in back play. The elbow barely grazed Rados but it was apparently significant enough to send him writhing in pain.

All three officials missed the incident, but fourth official Matthew Ross signalled Precious and explained the events. Precious had no doubt in sending Harper off and then cautioning Pryce for dissent.

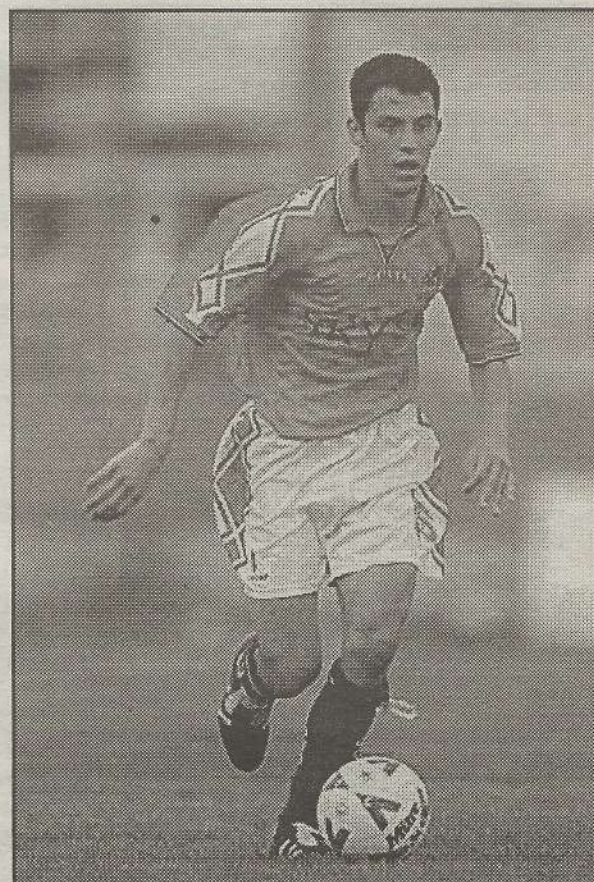
As the referee blew fulltime Breakers coach Lee Sterrey shook the hand of all three officials and then proceeded to remonstrate with Ross.

Justifying his actions, Sterrey later explained to the media. "The same bloke has sat in the fourth official's chair for the last eighteen months - it must have been a TV game, that's all I can say about it!"

"I've been here a number of times when things have gone on in back play.

"That's the thing that upsets me, is that you are there for eighteen months and several games at this ground, and you only report one thing in eighteen months - well, if that's consistency I don't know!"

"You can't report one thing in eighteen months and say you are doing an



Alex Kiratzoglou: a 'shining light in midfield' for the Knights.

honest job."

Rodrigo Vargas, Melbourne's pony-tail mountain at the back was delighted with the victory.

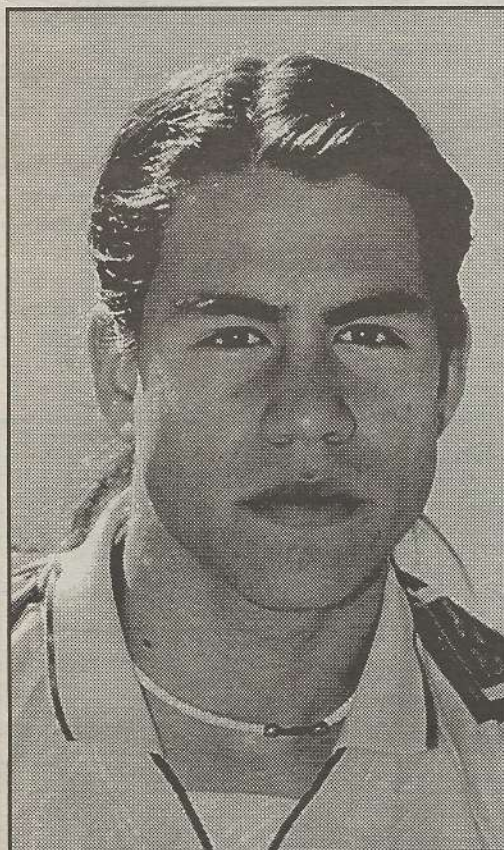
"It was a great victory. I thought the boys battled well. We were under the pump for most of the game but battled well and didn't concede a goal, which is the most important thing.

"We came here with a point and gained two so it was a good result."

Vargas explained the Knights' tactics of sitting behind the ball. "We wanted to soak up as much pressure as we could and the longer the game went the better it was for us.

"We just tried to keep a clean sheet and sneak away with a goal - which is what we did. We are probably one of the form teams of the comp, apart from last week's hiccup.

"Only one defeat in the last nine games. The boys are now aiming for a top six position, and if we keep going like this anything is possible."



Rod Vargas: part of a resolute Knights defence.

By Michael Kmet

The Newcastle Breakers suffered only their second defeat at home this season to a determined and stoic Melbourne Knights outfit.

The Knights are the only team this year to have defeated Newcastle on both occasions. Ironically they did it in the traditional Breakers way - by sitting eleven players behind the ball and trying to catch Newcastle on the break.

It was a frustrating night for

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King hit! Now Wolves for the title?

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 5

Mennillo 48, Reid 59, Horsley 60, Young 85, Blake 90.

FOOTBALL KINGZ 1

Bunce 29.

Sunday night at Brandon Park, Wollongong. Crowd: 3,618.



MATCH STATS:



WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Pogliacomi, Ceccoli, Stanton, Cervinski (Souris 66), Horsley, Reid, Young, Chipperfield, Petrovski,

Huxley (Spencer 73), Mennillo (Blake 88).



FOOTBALL KINGZ: Utting, Bunce, Van Steeden, Ngata, Lammers (Suri 64), Vichelich, Perry, Stergiopoulos, Jones, Jackson (Campbell

67), Rufer (Moya 87).

Yellows

Wolves: Pogliacomi 56.

Kingz: Bunce 36, Lammers 51, Van Steeden 55.

Reds:

Kingz: Bunce 67.

Best Players:

3. HORSLEY (WOLVES)

2. Huxley (Wolves)

1. Van Steeden (Kingz)

Referee: Con Diomis



Wolves' inspirational captain Matt Horsley.

ly Horsley, executed close skills and passing in Kingz's penalty area, setting up Young for a left-foot shot. Young, quickly closed down by Kingz's defence, flicked the ball to Petrovski who shot just to the right of goal.

Wolves continued to take the game to Kingz in wave upon wave. Defenders like Van Steeden held out and cleared well - but were allowed little time to draw breath.

Wollongong oozed confidence - sometimes getting too clever.

In the 20th minute Paul Reid ran the ball into Kingz's penalty area - but took it too far and was tackled by Jones.

Kingz occasionally showed glimpses of their own attacking talent - fast, first-time passing through midfield - but their attacks broke down with loose balls before they reached Wolves' area.

One exception was Ivan Vichelich who won a corner from Horsley and Cervinski. Jones took the corner and Les Pogliacomi made a remarkable leap and catch. The keeper, however, took a knock in the process and looked unsettled for the remainder of the match.

In the 29th minute Kingz had a couple of half chances, first at a header on a cross from the left and then with a shot from the right across the face of goal.

But in less than a minute the visitors were presented with an unmissable chance. A free kick from Jones 35 metres out cleared everyone waiting in the box, surprising Pogliacomi. The ball at first seemed goal-bound, but hit the right upright and rolled back along the goal line where Bunce had the easiest of tap-ins.

Wolves responded immediately, Jones acrobatically intercepting Chipperfield in Kingz's penalty area.

In the 36th minute goalscorer Bunce earned his first yellow card by bringing down Chipperfield as he was accelerating toward goal.

In the final minutes of the first half, newcomer John Lammers combined well

with Wynton Rufer down the left and crossed to Ivan Vichelich whose shot from distance was deflected for a corner.

It was Vichelich, too, who almost gave Kingz a 2-0 lead. He beat the keeper from the left but his shot went to the right post where Robbie Stanton miraculously dug the ball out.

Soon after the players returned to the field Young played cleverly down the right, angled for goal, turn his defender twice and crossed to Horsley. The Wolves skipper picked out former Kingz player Dino Mennillo whose shot just beat Utting and screamed in off the left upright.

Several minutes later Jones and Harry Ngata together bungled a clearance and almost let Chipperfield through to goal.

In the 48th minute Bunce headed a Jones corner wide of the right post.

A minute later Petrovski had the ball down Wolves' right flank, then turned to goal. He passed to Young in front of the target but Kingz defenders again closed him down but the ball fell for Reid who hit the back of the net.

Wolves fans were overjoyed when in the 60th minute Horsley intercepted a back-pass, went to the keeper's right and carefully angled the ball inside the left upright.

Kingz might have had time to pull some goals back, but in the 67th minute Bunce toppled Alvin Ceccoli, earned his second yellow card, and left Kingz lame.

Despite an odd penetrating ball - in the 71st minute Petrovski met a Reid cross with an extended foot but put the ball high and wide - Wolves held the ball back and slowed the game down, exposing themselves to the still aggressive Kingz.

From a free kick a metre outside the Wollongong penalty area Rufer shot hard and high. And Rufer was only just too late to meet a driving cross from Perry on the right.

Perry, like Rufer, kept working for another goal, pushing balls through to the Kingz forwards.

In the 85th minute Horsley and Young broke together, 40 metres from goal. Horsley, on the right, took the ball to the keeper before laying it off for Young on his left. The striker easily notched his 12th goal for the season.

In time added on Petrovski passed to Ben Blake who pulled his shot across the face of goal. Waiting on the right, however, was Young who kept the ball in play and crossed it back in, perfect for Blake to lob the keeper and score inside the left upright.

The last moment of excitement was a soccer equivalent of cricket's French cut: Spencer hoofed another shot at goal, it deflected slightly on its way through players in the penalty area, hit the keeper, then the ground and rebounded straight up over the crossbar.

Jones was very effective for Kingz and Van Steeden was strong on Young and displayed good touch even when red shirts were swarming his penalty area. And for Wolves David Huxley tackled with finesse and was cool and accurate playing out of defence.

But Horsley was magnificent - chasing tirelessly as usual, but winning a phenomenal amount of possession and contributing many scalpel-like passes in Wolves' frequent attacks.

One suspects a better team would have lapped up Wolves' occasionally loose passing out of defence (but perhaps

Wolves wouldn't be as casual against another team?)

Wolves coach Nick Theodorakopoulos said he was ecstatic with the result and "wasn't unhappy with the first half either". He said it was only normal that a side on the verge of making the top six would be able to absorb Wollongong's early pressure and come back and score a goal.

He said he did bring to his players' attention that, down at 0-1, they had a tendency to try and get the goal back in five seconds. "I made it quite clear that that's something that doesn't always happen. We have to consolidate, even 1-0 down, and shore up our defence and then our ability to score will come."

He didn't think the five-goal second half was the best Wolves had played this season: "I think we played well in New Zealand, both games actually. We certainly like playing against them."

He thought 15 goals in four games was very impressive. "In a season where you have to play the same side four times it takes a very special team to pick up maximum points. And barring that incident in Auckland, with injury time at the end, we probably would have picked up 12 points. It certainly shows some good character. And that's twice against Auckland we've come back from 1-0."

Kingz's Shane Rufer, always magnanimous, said his side had been on the wrong end of the goals but all had been entertaining games.

He rated Wollongong the best team they had played in the league. "They caused us the most problems. They have very good individuals in their team, their front men are very quick and they play well as a unit."

He said John Lammers, after his experience in Holland, would definitely be an asset.

Theodorakopoulos said, though his players were fit and that Esala Masi was back and Neil Harlock had resumed training, Wolves were still in the market for a player.

"If we can strengthen the squad by one player we will be doing so," he said.

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Kingz fight back



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McPherson leads the Carlton revival

CARLTON 1

McPherson 82

BRISBANE STRIKERS 0

Sunday night at Olympic Park, Melbourne. Crowd: 1,402.



MATCH STATS:



CARLTON:
Anastasiadis;
Atkinson,
McPherson, Horvat,
Douglas; Marth
Lapsansky,
Thompson, Slater,
Conroy (Markovski
73), Moreira (Motsiopoulos 67)



BRISBANE STRIKERS: Bolton;
Gwynne, Stefanutto,
McKain; Harris,
Hews, Grierson (Pilic
72), Srhoj, North;
Battistin, Foster

Yellows

Carlton: Atkinson 58.

Strikers: Hews 22, Battistin 55.

Best Players:

3. MCPHERSON (CARL)

2. Thompson (Carl)

1. North (Bris)

Referee: Simon Micallef



Man of the Match and goalscorer Dave McPherson

By Kevin Christopher

Carlton continued their recent good form with a 1-0 win over Brisbane on Sunday night, a result which lifts them to fifth in the table but leaves Brisbane in a precarious position with just nine matches to play. Nearly three quarters of the way through the season, it is hard to believe these teams occupied the top two positions after seven rounds, such

has been their subsequent form.

The Blues entered the match as slight favourites following their win in Canberra last Tuesday, yet the stats remained stark - just three wins in their past twelve outings.

Meanwhile, Brisbane were rapidly running out of chances and excuses as they pursued an unlikely finals berth, with just one win in their previous nine games.

It says much about the inconsistency of the other finals hopefuls that the Strikers started the game just three points behind Carlton, and they not only had the chance to close the gap on the Blues but also convince non-Queenslanders that the Strikers hold valid claims to play in May.

The Blues went into the match without coach Stuart Munro, who had been sent home on doctors orders, but stand-in coach Fab Incantalupo would have been encouraged by the Blues' start.

Obviously fired up despite Munro's absence, they were unlucky not to earn a penalty in the opening minute when club top scorer Alex Moreira went down under a challenge from John McKain, but Simon Micallef wasn't convinced.

Moreira's strike partner Mike Conroy continues the NSL's most embarrassing goal drought, but he almost got the gorilla off his back after eleven minutes. Archie Thompson harrassed Shane Stefanutto into an error inside his own penalty area and the ball squirted clear toward Moreira.

Clint Bolton needed to race off his line to thwart the Brazilian, but the ball broke free to Conroy on the edge of the eighteen yard box and his chip-volley beat Bolton all ends up only to bounce on to the top of the crossbar.

It was one of the few highlights of a low-key first half which promised much in midfield but delivered little in attack. Concerned over Carlton's tall timber at the back, Brisbane coach John Kosmina pushed defender Mark Battistin up front in an effort to match the height of McPherson and Douglas, but the decision had an unexpected side benefit.

Peter Grierson provided great drive in midfield and caused havoc when taking the ball forward on surging runs out of the centre circle.

Jade North also had his moments on the right flank and may have prompted Incantalupo to switch Thompson and Slater on the wings. But as Kosmina pointed out after the match, North still suffers from the 'Scheinflug factor' where wing backs are instructed to undertake a safety first approach to the position.

With a more positive outlook, it is easy to visualise North developing into one of the league's most exciting players.

He combined with fellow Joey Wayne Srhoj to unlock the Blues defence on a number of occasions and with some in-from strikers the visitors may have caused an upset.

But with Paul Foster only just returning from injury and Mark Battistin playing in an unfamiliar role it needed some reinforcements from the rear to help break the deadlock.

Grierson was certainly keen, as was Chay Hews, but Carlton continued to create the better openings in the second half,

with an Andrew Marth volley after seventy minutes requiring an excellent reflex parry from Bolton. The captain actually got the ball in the net ten minutes later but he was the victim of a fractional offside decision.

By that stage it seemed Brisbane had done enough to secure a point, but David McPherson has made a habit of getting into dangerous positions and he was rewarded for his persistence with eight minutes remaining.

He drifted forward to get on the end of a deep corner and although his initial header popped up into the air, it enabled Marth to get a second touch back to the Scottish international who then lashed home from twelve metres.

The ball took a deflection on its way to the net, stranding a wrong-footed Bolton, but the ball appeared goalbound in any case.

While much publicity has been generated by the guest players at Sydney clubs, McPherson stands tall as the pick of the league's imports. One of the league's most reliable defenders, he now has five goals for the season and his lead in the Carlton Player of the Year award is no accident.

Carlton almost got a clincher on the break in injury time, when Marth set substitute Markovski free down the left. His square ball to fellow sub Angelo Motsiopoulos seemed inch perfect with the youngster beating Bolton to the ball, but the 'keeper recovered superbly to deny Motsiopoulos his first NSL goal.

Despite leaving Melbourne with nothing tangible to show for his team's efforts, John Kosmina refused to be too downcast over the result.

"Considering the level of experience between the teams I thought we did exceptionally well" he claimed. I thought we were dead unlucky to be honest. We're not putting the opportunities away we were earlier in the season."

He was upbeat enough to suggest his side deserved a share of the points but such a result would have been cruel on the Blues who had the best chances and without some expert work from Bolton, Brisbane may have struggled to stay in the game.

Fab Incantalupo was naturally pleased with the win and even mildly amused at the thought of having a 100% coaching record in the NSL.

But the win marked the club's first consecutive victories since December and perhaps even more significant was the team's ability to keep consecutive clean sheets.

The Blues face a difficult run to the finals with home matches against Perth, South Melbourne (twice) and Wollongong likely to be decisive. Away matches against Newcastle and Sydney Olympic will provide Carlton with further opportunities to prove they truly deserve



Exciting Strikers youngster Jade North.

a spot in the finals.

On this performance there are still plenty of doubters, with the official attendance figure of 1,402 another indication that the Melbourne public aren't inspired by the team's current form.

Although a certain motor race a few kilometres away may have had something to do with their smallest crowd of the year....

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Power impresses but Glory gains points

PERTH GLORY 2

Aurelio 18, Trajkovski 64.

PARRAMATTA POWER 1

Ardone 83.

Sunday night at Perth Oval, Perth. Crowd, 11,737.



MATCH STATS:



PERTH GLORY:

Petkovic, Trajkovski, Carbone, Wehrman, Harnwell, Valle, Edgar, Ergic (Despotovski 75), Halpin, Aurelio, Edwards.

Subs not used: Thorpe, Afkos.



PARRAMATTA POWER:

Gibson, Plesa (Bennett 73), Byrnes, Eagleton, Vrkic, Berry, Barrett, Burns, Gibson (Ardone 73), Sterjovski, Griffiths (Townsend 65).

Yellows:

Glory: Edwards 29, Carbone 39, Harnwell 62, Edgar 87, Despotovski 89.

Power: Plesa 23, Sterjovski 39, Burns 42, Vrkic 62, Byrnes 68.

Reds:

Glory: Halpin 73.

Power: Byrnes 87.

Best Players:

3-PETKOVIC (GLORY)

2-Halpin (Glory)

1-Trajkovski (Glory)

Referee: Mark Shield

By Dennis Gedling

Perth Glory scored their thirteenth win of the season over a very good Parramatta side at Perth Oval.

The home side was reduced to ten men halfway through the second half as were Power near injury time but this game will go down as one of the most pathetic displays of refereeing seen in recent NSL

memory.

The visitors were the livelier in the first half, dominating the opening fifteen minutes.

In the 18th minute though, Glory shocked everyone and perhaps even themselves hitting the lead from Brazilian Aurelio. An inswinging corner by Troy Halpin was hit over to the far post and almost went in for a goal itself but the ball was nudged in by the Brazilian.

Glory absorbed all the pressure in the first half mainly due to the fact Power dominated the midfield. Ivan Ergic and Edgar were overrun by the likes of Jacob Burns and Steve Berry giving Mile Sterjovski and Joel Griffiths good service.

The home side, with make shift sweeper Kasey Wehrman doing well, took the pressure with confidence. Usual sweeper Gareth Naven was a late omission because personal reasons (his wife gave birth the previous night.)

Halfway through the first half the referee made his first very poor decision of the afternoon. John Carbone made a rash tackle on a Power player, the player deciding the tackle was a tad harsh and striking Carbone on the side of the face, the referee decided a booking wasn't warranted when it was clearly a sending off.

Jason Petkovic saved a great shot from Sterjovski close to half time when the Olyroo found space and outgunned Dion Valle but the shot was parried by the Glory keeper. Another Power player came close to a dismissal after a rash tackle, the crowd baying for a red but only a yellow was given.

In the second half the referee stepped up the quest to baffle the crowd with baffling decisions after a scuffle in the Glory goal.

Jamie Harnwell went forward and a cross was just out of his reach with the Power keeper Mike Gibson getting to the ball just front of him. Harnwell went in with the boot but was a moment too late but did not strike the keeper.

Vrkic decided to retaliate on Harnwell

and a scuffle broke out with the keeper trying to split up the fight. Bookings resulted for both Harnwell and Vrkic although it should have been nothing but a red for the latter, his retaliation not unlike Danny Milosevic's send off the previous season at the same ground.

Glory soon went two up after a great goal from Robert Trajkovski. Wehrman linked well with Halpin who found a running Trajkovski running into the area who put the ball off the side of his left boot and in between the keeper and the right post - the finishing first class.

Townsend came on for Griffiths halfway through the second half and Power tried to get back into the game that they were unlucky to be losing.

Their chances increased when Halpin was given his orders after abusing the referee, his sending one off only one of a few correct choices the referee made all game.

Power then stepped up another gear and put the home side under great immense pressure. Townsend was tackled harshly in the area twice by Wehrman and one should have been a penalty and a booking but the ref waved play on.

Ardone came on for John Gibson with 10 minutes to go and instantly made an impact on the right side. He got a goal back for the Power when he tapped in a Burns cross with the keeper nowhere to be seen.

Power was reduced to ten men near full time after Mark Byrnes made a late tackle on the Perth keeper which resulted in his second yellow card.

The finale was drowned out with boos directed at the absolutely inept refereeing which infuriated the crowd. A total of two red cards and eleven bookings from the match and the referee was escorted off the ground.

After the match Glory coach Bernd Stange said he was happy. "We made it hard for ourselves but we came through, a win is a win and our home ground advantage grows."

As for Halpin's sending off (which he



Aurelio Schwartz: scored early for Glory.

was angry over, his tirade of abuse directed at the player for once and not the ref) Stange said "I will discuss that behind closed doors with Troy."

Power coach David Mitchell noted that "We should have got more from the game, we weren't capitalising on our chances ... it's the story of our season."

The visitors would feel very hard done by not to get a point from the match, the domination in some parts of the match was nothing seen here for quite some time, the goal against the play in the first half knocked the wind out Power.

Halpin (until his send off), Petkovic and Wehrman were standout performers. Power had many fine players from Griffiths in the first half to Burns and Berry over the whole game, their midfield dominating the likes of Ergic and Edgar.

Sterjovski had more than enough chances to score in this game but the pressure from Wehrman and Valle prevented him from getting on the score-sheet.

Glory and WA news

By Brett Klucznik

After the success of last season's draft, Perth Glory have once again made their entire playing squad available to W.A. State League teams for the winter 2000 season.

Soccer Australia has approved the scheme which allows Glory players to hold dual registration with Soccer Australia and Soccer WestCoast, enabling them to participate in both N.S.L. and W.A. State competitions. Players not selected for N.S.L. duty with Glory will be available to play for their allotted W.A. club.

The scheme, a first in Australia when originally implemented last season, involves no added expense to Soccer WestCoast clubs, Glory management paying the wages of their players regardless of which competition they are playing.

In addition Glory will be making a contribution towards Soccer WestCoast's administrative costs. Ashfield/Bunbury however claimed that last season's draft was of little benefit to them, and opted not to join in.

The player allocations for the up-coming season are:
Rockingham City: Peter Buljan and John Carbone
Swan I.C.: Dion Valle and Ivan Ergic
Bayswater City Panthers: Edgar and Tony Franken

Inglewood United: Vinko Buljubasic and Rob Trajkovski

Perth S.C.: Gareth Naven and Hamilton Thorp

Cockburn City: Alistair Edwards

Sorrento: Jamie Harnwell

Floreat Athena: Con Boutsianis and James Afkos

E.C.U. Joondalup: Kasey Wehrman and Troy Halpin

Fremantle City: Bobby Despotovski and Jason Petkovic

Western Knights: Scott Miller and Ljubo Milicevic

Further to this, Ljubo Milicevic has been sacked from his local side Western Knights because of his 'attitude to the side' and laziness when playing.

It appears that Stirling Lions (formally Stirling Macedonia) have been relegated from the W.A. Premier League. The club, who finished last season in ninth place, was late in paying their fees to Soccer West Coast and did not participate in the Night Series or the recent Perth Glory-Soccer West Coast draft.

While no official announcement can be confirmed, Rockingham City, runners-up in last season's 1st Division, has taken the Lions place in both the draft and pre-season competition.

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Perosh gives Spirited display for Olympic

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1

Cardozo 22

GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0

Sunday night at Belmore Oval, Sydney. Crowd: 5, 326.



MATCH STATS:



SYDNEY OLYMPIC:

Perosh, Thomas (Kalantzis 65), Zoricich, Tsekinis, Baillie, Arambasic, Emerton, Mendez (Sinozic 45), Wilson, Zorbas (Tome 90).



GIPPSLAND FALCONS:

Jevdjovic, Fak, Gotis, Durakovic, MacNicol, Vargas, Bell, Puca (Katz 86), Robertson, Marcina (Savage 74), Mandic (Nilo 78).

Yellows: Nil.

Best Players:

3. PEROSH (OLYMPIC)
2. Fak (Gippsland)
1. Baillie (Olympic).

Referee: Jeremy Blaney

only real highlight of this lacklustre encounter.

Worse than the dreary on-field display was the news that Olympic playmaker Gabriel Mendez is likely to miss the remainder of the season with another serious knee injury.

"He went over on his knee just before half-time when he tried to cross the ball", said Olympic coach Branko Culina after the match.

"It's sad for the man, it's sad for the club. He's got to go and see the doctor tomorrow. Our doctor (Dr. James Harrison) thinks it is a cruciate ligament."

One bright spot for the home side was the form of new signing John Perosh. The ex-Northern Spirit 'keeper pulled off several stunning saves to help his new team to the three points.

Things looked promising for Olympic early on. Brett Emerton embarked upon a couple of his trademark weaving runs down the flank and Zlatko Arambasic had a shot deflected just wide of goal by Mehmet Durakovic.

Cardozo spurned the first real chance of the match, scuffing his shot straight to Falcons 'keeper Bojo Jevdjovic after a cross from Lyndsay Wilson.

Gippsland midfielder Andy Vargas was busy in the opening stages. In the 10th minute he found Perosh equal to a fierce drive and then a dipping 25-yard free kick.

The new gloveman again proved his mettle in the 19th, making a well-timed sprint off his goal line to save at the feet of rampaging Falcons forward Igor Mandic.

Mendez initiated the move that gave Olympic their one-goal lead. He won the ball in the middle of the park and released Emerton with well-weighted pass to the right.

The Olyroo captain drilled a low, hard cross into the crowded Gippsland penalty box and Cardozo back-heeled the ball beyond the reach of Jevdjovic into the far corner of the net.

Olympic nearly doubled their winning margin shortly afterwards, when Cardozo met Emerton's cross with an angled shot.

Jevdjovic dived full length to palm the ball clear, and then bravely intervened again as Mendez pounced on the rebound.

Thanks to the harrying midfield work of Vargas and Clayton Bell, the visitors were able to disrupt the fluency of Olympic and fight their way back into the match.

An intricate string of passes culminated in another fine save from Perosh in the 40th minute, as he tipped Bell's daisy-

cutting shot around the post.

With Mendez replaced by defender Sebastian Sinozic at half time, Olympic seemed to lack the inventiveness required to break down a very stubborn Falcons defence.

Emerton, Arambasic and particularly substitute Chris Kalantzis showed a tendency to over-elaborate their play, rather than playing the simple ball.

Dean Fak stood out at the back for Gippsland, always closing down his man effectively and distributing accurate passes upfield.

The crowd saw only glimpses of the Falcons' attacking potential, although an equaliser seemed more and more likely as the game progressed.

Brian MacNicol worked tirelessly and Vargas saw a couple of his well-struck set-piece efforts fly narrowly wide.

A golden chance fell to Robbie Puca in the 76th minute. The young West Australian managed to get in behind the Olympic defence and aim a shot towards the bottom far corner of the net.

Perosh again rescued his side, though, pulling off a crucial reflex save and denying Gippsland the goal that they probably deserved.

Chris Zoricich got a header on target from point-blank range in the 88th minute, but Jevdjovic stuck out a glove to thwart the big New Zealander.

A Chris Kalantzis effort in stoppage time at the end of the match typified Olympic's day.

He rounded a couple of defenders with seeming ease but when faced with Jevdjovic he shot tamely into the 'keeper's arms.

"I'm happy with the three points but not with the way we played," said a disappointed Culina.

"We had our chances but we didn't take them. In the second half Gippsland lifted their game and we dropped off a bit, and in the end we were a bit fortunate."

"John Perosh was outstanding. I was delighted to get him, I think he'll make our other 'keepers work hard as well."

"Scott Baillie did very well again. We all like to give credit to the attacking players, but sometimes you've got to take your hat off to these people who just go out there and do the job."

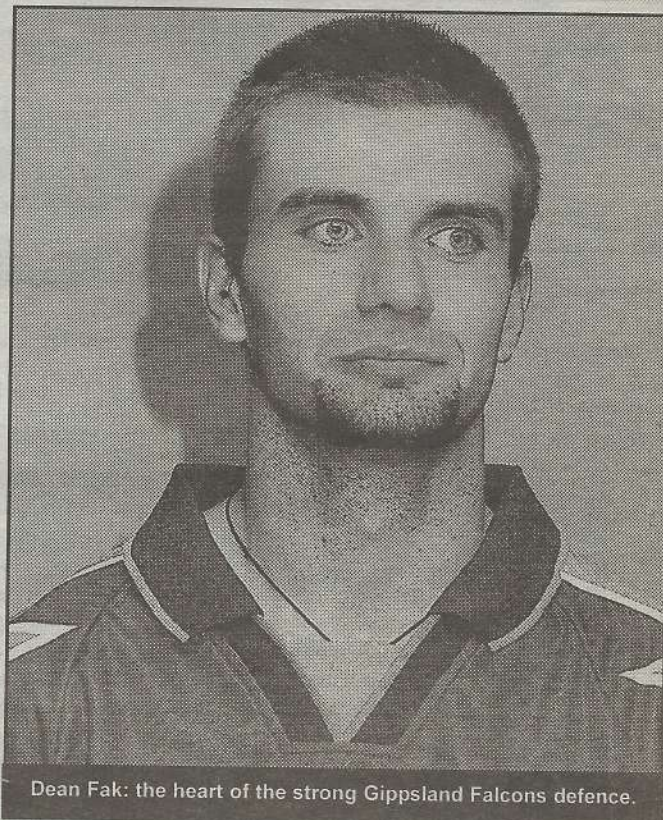
"It's really sad to lose Chi Chi for the season because he's a terrific character around the club. Having a person like him around really helps with team spirit."

"Ante Juric is out with a groin injury and Nick Carle is also out of action for about two weeks."

The next few rounds are shaping as a real test of character for injury-hit Olympic. Brett Emerton is another absentee - he jets over to Holland to join the Olyroos for a training camp this week.

The return from injury of club captain Peter Tsekenis is a big plus, though. He had a solid match in his deep-lying midfield role, although it will be a while before he is back to his best.

Gippsland boss Jeff Hopkins felt that



Dean Fak: the heart of the strong Gippsland Falcons defence.

his team had done at least enough to earn a draw.

"Dean Fak did well, he was very consistent at the back, along with Manny Gotis and Mehmed Durakovic."

"You look at the two sides and, apart from a couple of players, you can't really see a huge gulf there."

"John Hutchison was out suspended today, and we missed him for sure."

"In the second half we had the better of the game and we had the better of the chances throughout the whole game. We used the ball quite well at times."

"I can't fault the lads, we've just got to be a little bit tougher all over the park."

"We had a couple of chances that we should have put away, we did well on a few occasions, but then that's the story of our season."

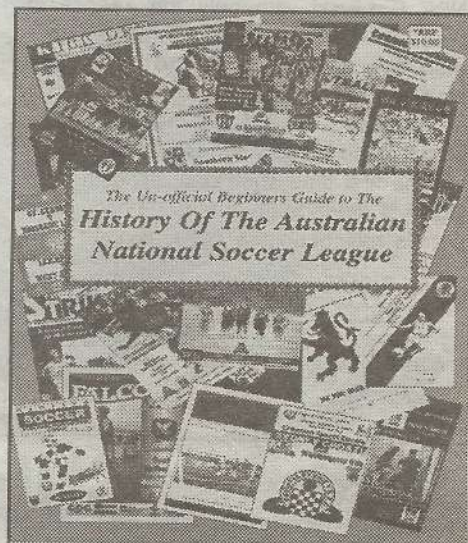


John Perosh: an impressive debut after he was loaned out from Northern Spirit to their crosstown rivals.

By Ben Cubby

Sydney Olympic maintained their slender lead at the top of the NSL ladder with an unconvincing 1-0 win over Gippsland Falcons at Belmore on Sunday night.

A cheeky back-heeled goal from Pablo Cardozo in the 22nd minute was the



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Barlow the star for Cosmos



SYDNEY UNITED 1

Polak 53

CANBERRA COSMOS 1

Jermen 86

Sunday night at Sydney United Sports Centre, Sydney. Crowd 2,106.

MATCH STATS:



SYDNEY UNITED:

Hughes, Bosnar, Savoca, Maric, Palapanis (Jermen 73), Bozinovski, Rakic, Genc, Arrarte (Savic 84), Bosevski (Zec 59),

Pondeljak.



CANBERRA COSMOS:

Barlow, Popovich, Burt, Purdue, Polak, Watkins (Kolpak 52), Arranz (Milin 83), Hamilton, Hooker, Roberts, De Jesus

(Prenzowski 86).

Yellow:

United: Tom Maric 29

Canberra: Danny Burt 31, Brian Hamilton 85, Paul Roberts 87

Best Players:

3. BARLOW (COSMOS)

2. Genc (United)

1. Polak (Cosmos)

Referee: Brett Hugo

United, their finishing left a lot to be desired.

Bosevski appeared terribly frustrated, securing a number of opportunities but lacking decisive finishing when it counted.

However, to his credit he continued to give 100%.

Young Andy Rakic grew in confidence as the game went on and his work rate was impeccable. He made a number of attacking runs up the left hand side and on each time returned to his defending role.

In the 23rd minute, Arrarte struck an almost perfect ball beating the Cosmos keeper but unfortunately the sweetly hit half volley cruised past the bar.

Two minutes later his opposing number Daniel Watkins was troubling Hughes in the United goal with an almost identical strike.

Whilst United had the majority of attack, they were guilty of allowing Cosmos goal opportunities from free kicks with undisciplined fouls.

Ivo DeJesus had a couple of opportunities but neither threatened.

Bosevski continued to penetrate the Cosmos defence, on one occasion running into the penalty box with the ball before executing a tremendous shot only to see keeper Grant Barlow stretch across the ball's path and parry it away, saving a certain goal.

Finally Bosevski was rewarded with a goal ... only to see the linesman signal off side to the despair of the United players and crowd alike.

The half time scoreline of nil-all must have truly frustrated United's coach Ivan Petkovic.

Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni, on the other hand, obviously told his players to be more involved and the Cosmos came out with a more forceful approach to the game.

Instantly they showed more urgency both on and off the ball and within three minutes it appeared certain that Polak would score from three metres, with only the keeper to beat, but United's Terry



Cosmos keeper Grant Barlow had an excellent game for Cosmos against United at Edensor Park on Sunday.

Palapanis denied Polak with a desperate sliding tackle in front of the ball deflecting it out for a corner.

Cosmos' Danny Burt stood out in defence and added depth to the attack on a number of occasions. On one such occasion he found David Arranz in the box who in turn skilfully curled the ball around Brett Hughes but unfortunately around the right hand upright.

On 53 minutes it was Burt who again drew out the United defence before chipping over to find Polak.

The Canberra midfielder was lurking alone in the Sydney United penalty area and the United defence stopped when the linesman lifted his flag but he then changed his mind and placed it down.

Polak himself was waiting for the referee's call, however, Brett Hugo waved play on and Polak steadied before driving a low shot past Brett Hughes.

Canberra, now leading one-nil, started to dictate the pace of the game slowing it down dramatically.

Genc proved he still has great ability to read a game, stepped up the attack and found plenty of openings in the Cosmos defence.

In the 63rd minute he ran into the penalty area and the defenders swarmed around him and he was brought down.

Referee Hugo immediately awarded the penalty and Eddie Bosnar (fresh from his Viareggio tournament in Italy with Marconi) strode to the ball giving it plenty of power but no

direction, striking it directly at the keeper who claimed the save.

Hugo hadn't finished with the penalties, five minutes later he awarded Canberra a penalty before consulting with his linesman after which he changed his mind, much to the relief of the United players (he awarded them a free kick out.)

The Cosmos team appeared to falter and allow United to play at their own pace, typically lifting in attack time after time. They raided the Cosmos goal area at every opportunity with Bosnar, a classic defender, finding himself on more than one occasion in an attacking position.

He took his chance late in the second half with a spectacular volley from the edge of the box but Cosmos custodian Grant Barlow was equal to the task saving in style.

With only minutes remaining it appeared that United had lost the game.

However, Genc continued to apply pressure and was clearly the danger man. With a few minutes remaining United equalised in the 86th minute with a superb goal.

The 19 year old Andy Rakic, who was industrious throughout the whole match, played the ball down the left hand side to Genc who again attacked the Cosmos defence with a scintillating run down the right hand side before crossing with pin point accuracy.

Mario Jermen, the substitute, was on hand to head the ball safely in the net this time.

Barlow, who played a tremendous game for the visitors, was a standout performer together with Soccerroo midfielder Jason Polak.

Andy Rakic and Aytek Genc for the home side were impressive.



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Carlton gets back to winning ways



CANBERRA COSMOS 0

CARLTON 2

Moriera 40, McPherson 43

Tuesday night at Bruce Stadium, Canberra. Crowd 1,502.

ROUND 24 GAME

MATCH STATS:



CANBERRA COSMOS:

Barlow, Burt, Polak (Purdue 78), Winnie (Milin 64), Watkins, Arranz, Hamilton (Musitano 59), Hooker, Clark, Roberts, De Jesus



CARLTON:

Anastasiadis, McPherson, Douglas (Motsopoulos 69), Marth (Markovski 78), Slater, Atkinson, Moriera (Deans

69), Lapsansky, Thompson, Conroy, Horvat.

Yellows:

Cosmos: Burt (35)

Best Players:

3: LAPSANSKY (CARLTON)

2: Thompson (Carlton)

1: Horvat (Carlton)

Referee: Perry Mur

By Nick Guoth

Carlton revived their playoff hopes last Tuesday when they defeated a stubborn Canberra Cosmos outfit 2-0 at Bruce Stadium.

Last year Carlton came to Canberra in early March in the same predicament and their record was further tarnished when they lost 2-0, but this time they were ready and following their narrow loss to South Melbourne the previous week, con-

fidence is back.

Yet for Canberra, it was the same old story. Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni lamented "I thought for the first forty minutes we were more than a match for Carlton. Then we had our usual 3 minutes of stupidity where we just do dumb things and concede two goals".

That was the story of this game with neither side conceding anything in the first 40 minutes before Carlton went two up in the matter of three minutes.

From then on, it was more for Carlton to believe in themselves and hold out against the spirited Canberra team.

The first chance of the game fell to Carlton when Mike Conroy met Stuart Slater's cross with a diving header, but it went directly to Grant Barlow.

Then five minutes later Lubo Lapsansky layed a ball off to the lively Archie Thompson. His fierce shot beat Barlow, but rebounded off the left upright before floating across goal and away for a goalkick.

Within seconds the ball was down the other end with Danny Watkins providing Paul Roberts to set up Ivo De Jesus, but his shot went wide. Then a Robert Hooker cross was knocked down by Watkins for David Arranz to shoot wide.

It all looked good for a lively game with much action, but then the midfield took over and it wasn't until the 28th minute before either team provided an attempt on goal.

A cross from Andrew Clark found David Arranz at the far post who headed back into the 6 yard area. Daniel Watkins was first to the ball, but he headed over the bar.

Then in the 40th minute it all changed. Lapsansky moved the ball to

his midfield partner Andrew Marth. A defender went to close him, but in doing so left Alex Moriera free and it was Moriera who was provided with the ball and an easy chance to finish which he did so with alacrity.

Two minutes later Thompson ran into the box and when tackled the ball fell to Conroy. His shot on the turn was tipped wide by Barlow.

From the ensuing corner by Lapsansky, Dave McPherson was found totally free in the middle of the box and sent his diving header past the unsighted Barlow.

Canberra had a pair of chances late in the second half, both falling to Watkins. The first came after a good build-up and was finished with him volleying at the keeper, whilst he sent the second wide with the keeper closing.

The second half was somewhat more relaxed with Carlton settling in and playing the ball around the backs whilst keeping it away from the Canberra players.

What shots there were in the first quarter of an hour fell to Carlton.

Marth saw his well saved, Thompson sent his wide and Moriera under pressure shot over.

Yet it was not only the defence that was holding out, but the work of



Lubo Lapsansky: a dominating performance from the Carlton tyro.

Lapsansky and Marth, until he was subbed, together with the penetration of Thompson down the right that overwhelmed Canberra and gave them no chance to really get back into the match.



Listen up! Cosmos' Ivo de Jesus with Melissa, soon in IS.

Masters in Wagga a big success

By Nick Guoth

The weekend of March 4th and 5th saw the holding of the 6th annual Wagga Ancient Flatulence Masters Cup. Held at Maher Oval in Wagga, 8 teams from NSW and the ACT participated.

St Francis from Canberra were the eventual winners over Tuggeranong Rovers, also from Canberra. St Francis knocked out defending champions Wagga AF in the semi-finals.

This year there were teams from different parts of NSW and the ACT. Canberra was represented by three teams, the third being Belwest whilst from NSW there was Camden, Bargo, Junee and two teams from Wagga.

The tournament has been well supported over the years, with 11 teams in 1996, and as it is held at the beginning of March it has become a good source as a pre-season workout and a good get-together.

This year the weather was very hot, around

35C, on the Saturday and a little cooler on Sunday, yet the games were still played with the same vigour as they are during the regular season.

The two pools of four teams on the Saturday provided the four semi-finalists, whilst the other four teams played in the Plate competition on the Sunday.

In the Plate Final, Bargo defeated Belwest. Wagga 2 defeated Wagga to gain third place, whilst St Francis took out the trophy 2-0 over Tuggeranong Rovers.

St Francis went through undefeated and didn't even concede a goal, most noteworthy considering they were forced to a penalty shootout in the semi-final.

Player of the tournament went to Tuggeranong Rovers player Robert Rees.

There is also a tournament on the weekend of November 11th and 12th in Canberra which is run by the Tuggeranong Club.

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Issue 6 March 2000



Olympic overpower arch rivals AIS



Power's Matt Thompson

A wet and miserable Sydney weekend prevented a host of National Youth League fixtures from going ahead. The problems began on Friday night in Newcastle and also forced the postponement of three other fixtures.

The Newcastle Breakers v Sydney Olympic Academy, Marconi Stallions Colts v QAS, Marconi Stallions v QAS (deferred from Rd 18) and the Newcastle Breakers Colts v Sydney United Colts fixtures were

postponed and will be played at a later date.

On a brighter note, four matches were played despite the constant threat of rain. A total of 21 goals were scored in the four matches played. The wet conditions obviously made goal-keeping and defending a nightmare.

On Saturday, the Wollongong Wolves Colts hosted the Parramatta Power. The Power took full advantage of their rival's hospitality and thumped the hosts by eight goals to nil. The win puts the Power three points clear of Northern Spirit in the chase for the minor premiership.

Milan Blagojevic scored after just two minutes to give the visitors the lead. The Wolves held out until the 35th minute until Brendan Santalab doubled the lead. The hosts must have been happy to go to the break only a couple of goals down but they could not maintain the resistance and fell further behind soon after half time.

Matt Thompson scored from the penalty spot after 50 minutes and Daniel Kukucka added another three minutes later. Blagojevic added his second in the 64th minute to make it five.

The Power then scored three times in the last ten minutes to complete the rout. Thompson struck again in the 81st minute before Lachlan Wright and Luke Roodenburg finished it off.

Sydney United recorded their 12th victory this season as they held on for a 3-2 result over the ACTAS. United led 3-0 at the break and seemed to be cruising but a spirited second-half showing by the visitors ended any thoughts of an easy afternoon.

United took a one goal advantage after 19 minutes when Akwasi Agyei found the back of the net. The hosts pressed for another and

were rewarded when Paul Mirosevic struck to increase the lead. It only got better for United as their leading scorer Allan Lo Proto added a third five minutes before the break.

The second half was a different story as the ACTAS fought back to make a game of it. Steve Arnott was on the field less than ten minutes before he reduced the deficit. A Matthew Anstey goal after 75 minutes set the scene for a thrilling final 15 minutes. However, the visitors ran out of time and United kept all three points.

At the Belmore Sports Ground, Sydney Olympic and the AIS battled out a replay of last season's Northern Division Grand Final. Both teams have been struggling of late to find the form of last season and were desperate for the three points to stay in contention with the league leaders.

Olympic led after 14 minutes courtesy of an Anthony Doumanis goal. The AIS equalised after 22 minutes when Mark Tsiorlas added to his ever increasing tally for the Institute. A John Kyrazopoulos goal just before half time lifted Olympic and after the break the hosts took an unassailable lead.

Robert Gasper added a third in the 57th minute and Lee Miot made it four when he breached the AIS defence after 83 minutes. Former Olympic Academy player Franco Parisi scored for the AIS to add some respectability to the scoreline. The 4-2 win to Olympic may be the spark that the side needs to renew their premiership challenge.

The Wollongong Wolves and the Northern Spirit Colts played out a 1-1 draw at Brandon Park. In their past two outings the Spirit have recorded draws against rivals that are well above them on the ladder.

Harvey Rodriguez put the Wolves ahead after 12 minutes but John Majurovski levelled the scores in the 32nd minute. The teams played out the remainder of the match with neither side being able to add to the score.

NORTHERN DIVISION NYL

	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
Parramatta Power	23	17	4	2	2	70	17	55
Northern Spirit	23	16	4	1	3	70	26	52
Sydney Olympic	23	14	4	2	5	61	32	46
Q.A.S.	22	13	2	2	7	63	36	41
Newcastle Breakers	21	13	1	1	6	41	25	40
A.I.S.	23	12	3	1	8	68	36	39
Sydney United	22	12	1	1	9	38	41	37
Marconi Stallions	18	12	0	1	6	50	24	36
Wollongong Wolves	23	10	4	2	9	33	34	34
A.C.T.A.S.	22	8	6	2	8	33	43	30
Newcastle Colts	23	9	2	1	12	36	44	29
Syd. Olympic Academy	22	8	1	2	13	41	69	25
N.S.W.I.S.	21	5	5	2	11	34	37	20
Marconi Stallions Colts	22	5	4	1	13	34	61	19
Northern Spirit Colts	24	4	6	1	14	24	55	18
Sydney United Colts	21	3	3	2	15	22	53	12
Wollongong Colts	21	0	2	1	19	11	98	2

ROUND 25

Wollongong Wolves	0	Parramatta Power	8
		Blagojevic 2, 64, B. Santalab 35, Thompson 50 pen, Kukucka 53, Wright 83, Roodenburg 89.	
Sydney United	3	ACTAS	2
		Agyei 19, Mirosevic 37, Lo Proto 40.	
Syd. Olympic	4	A.I.S.	2
		Doumanis 14, Kyrazopoulos 42, Gasper 57, Miot 63.	
Wollongong Wolves	1	Northern Spirit Colts	1
		Rodriguez 12, Majurovski 32	

Games Postponed:

- Newcastle Breakers v Sydney Olympic
- Marconi Stallions v QAS
- Newcastle Breakers Colts v Sydney United Colts
- NSWIS v Marconi Stallions

NORTHERN DIVISION Leading Scorers

RUSSELL MINER	Q.A.S.	20
Ryan Griffiths	Northern Spirit	14
Daniel Severino	Marconi Stallions	13
Elias Demourtzidis	A.I.S.	11
Daniel Kukucka	Parramatta Power	11
Allan Lo Proto	Sydney United	11
Kevo Gulesserian	Marconi Stallions (A.I.S.)	10

Round 26 Fixtures

FRIDAY 17 MARCH 2000

ACTAS v Newcastle Breakers (Bruce Stadium 5pm)
Parramatta Power v Marconi Stallions Colts (Parramatta Stadium 5.30pm)

SATURDAY 18 MARCH 2000

Sydney United Colts v Newcastle Breakers (Sydney Utd Sports Centre 4pm)
QAS v Sydney United (Suncorp Metway Stadium 4.45pm)
Northern Spirit Colts v Northern Spirit (Christie Park 6.30pm)
AIS v Wollongong Colts (AIS Soccer Field 7pm)

SUNDAY 19 MARCH 2000

Sydney Olympic Academy v NSWIS (Wentworth Park 4pm)
Marconi Stallions v Sydney Olympic (Marconi Stadium 8.15pm)
Bye - Wollongong Wolves Colts

By Roy Hay

Melbourne Knights just beat South Dandenong by two goals to one in a tight game on a very windy day at George Andrews Reserve.

Missing six regulars South Dandenong played very well according to coach Goran Runje. Left winger Chris Tabak opened the scoring for the Knights on the half hour with a free kick and Mark Paleka scored after 50 minutes.

The home defence failed to close down the Knights' player after a short corner kick. The South Dandenong goal came from Mentor Memeti.

In the late stages of the game South Dandenong hit the woodwork but could not gain the equalising goal the outfield play warranted. Daniel Rajher had an outstanding game at sweeper. A couple of weeks ago it was reported that Knights youth coach Luciano Trani had introduced 13 year old Serkan Oksuz. My comment was "This young striker banged in forty goals in the Super League last year and is definitely one to watch". Ernie Merrick at the VIS offered the youngster a trial and in the light of that has signed him up for a scholarship at the Institute.

The Victorian Institute of Sport had a comfortable four-nil win over Gippsland Falcons on Saturday. Evan Papadopoulos's goal after four minutes put the VIS on its way and Ricky Chillico made it two-nil in 34 minutes.

The second half saw an end to end match until two goals in quick succession settled things for the VIS. Ibrahim Ibraimi scored in 74 minutes, followed immediately by a second goal in as many matches for Michael Sham-Yuen.

Carlton continued at the head of the league after its eight-nil win over Albury Wodonga. Daniel Vasilevski scored twice and all the other goals were singles by Eddie Awad, speedy Steve Martin, Joshua Kennedy, Daniel Debevc, David Puccio and Frank Lagana.

South Melbourne dominated the first half running away to a four-nil lead against the Melbourne Knights Academy, but the second half was a different story as the young Academy lads fought back and the final score was five-one. As John Kennedy said afterwards, "We only drew the second half, after an excellent first period". Adrian Cuzzupe, Adam Poole, Tass Psonis and Mustafa Mustafa scored in the first half, and Jim Archimanditis in the second for South Melbourne, while Ibrahim Hamzic got the Academy's goal.

It is reported that the match between Bulleen and Preston was not played because of inadequate line markings.

SOUTHERN DIVISION NYL

Carlton 8	Albury Wodonga 0
Vasilevski 2, Awad, Martin Kennedy, Debevc, Puccio Lagana.	
VIS 4	Gippsland Falcons 0
Papadopoulos, Chillico, Ibrahim, Sham-Yuen	
South Dandenong 1	Melbourne Knights 2
Hamzic	Tabak, Paleka
Mel. Knights Acad. 0	South Melbourne 5
	Cuzzupe, Poole, Psonis, Mustafa, Archimanditis

Bulleen Inter v Preston Lions

(Match postponed)

Fawkner Blues: Bye

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CARLTON	15	12	3	0	60	8	39
VIS	15	11	1	3	44	12	34
Melb. Knights	15	8	2	5	40	28	26
Bulleen Kings	15	8	2	5	38	28	26
South Melbourne	13	8	0	5	36	14	24
Gipps. Falcons	14	6	3	5	26	29	21
South Dandenong	14	5	3	6	20	26	18
Fawkner Blues	13	4	3	6	16	27	15
Knights Academy	13	3	0	10	11	29	9
Albury Wodonga	15	2	2	11	18	57	8
Preston Lions	14	1	1	12	13	64	4

Canberra Deakin in semis

Nathan Long saw Canberra Deakin move through to the semi finals of the ACT soccer Federation Cup with a convincing 3-1 win over the White Eagles at Jamison Oval on Sunday.

The first half developed into somewhat of a arm wrestle, with very few chances. The White Eagles got the better of the early stages, their willingness to attack out of defence the key to most of their chances.

The Deakin defense soon shut this option down and began to apply more pressure. Deakin finally scored in the 31st minute when Tony Lemezina was tackled after making a run down the left side of the goal square. The ball ricocheted towards goal. Luka Ujdar beat White Eagles keeper Worsley to the loose ball and chipped it past him for a 1-0 lead.

Nine minutes later Ujdar took a free kick 35 metres out, slightly to the right of the goal. He decided to have a long range shot and it almost worked, crashing into the near post.

A minute later Lemezina, in front of goal, turned and juggled the ball and had the keeper completely beaten. He laid up a pass for Bajurin, who, with an open goal, pushed his shot over the crossbar.

One minute before half-time, Ujdar feed Joe Skrtic on the left corner of the goal square. Skrtic made his chance count, and fired a low shot past the diving keeper into the bottom left-hand corner.

The second half continued in much the same vein as the start of the first, except the Deakin defense began to suffocate any form of White Eagles attack.

They finally broke in the 83rd minute when Ned Aleksic, almost in desperation fired off a shot 30 metres from goal. The ball just dropped over the head of Deakin goalkeeper Navmovski to reduce the lead to 2-1.

Eleven minutes later, Deakin put the game away when replacement Vince Bodo crossed to Lemezina in the box. On his second touch, Lemezina fired the ball into the top right hand corner of the net to finish the scoring at 3-1.

Deakin coach Bernie Lustica was pleased with the defensive effort which

ensured safe passage through to next weeks semi-finals.

"We closed them down, we did our homework last week, and we stepped it (defence) up a gear," Lustica said.

White Eagles Coach Gaby Witt was disappointed with the loss, but is now looking towards the regular season.

"We had three or four chances in the first half, but Deakin put a lot of pressure on us, they played very well," he mused.

Kyle McGarrigle faced the windy conditions and light rain at Jamison Oval, where University of Canberra defeated Burns 1-0 in the third round of the Federationb Cup.

In what was a tight match, the University of Canberra dominated the first half firing some quality shots at Burns goalkeeper Jim Carr, finally scoring 35 minutes into the game.

The goal came after University of Canberra received a penalty about 20 metres out, Bartone's shot ricocheted off the post where it was cleaned up by Castro and put into the top right hand corner of the goal mouth.

It was only in the 66th minute when University of Canberra's goalkeeper was first tested with a good volley from Turco, which was tapped over the top of the goals by McKenna.

However University of Canberra's defence was impressive. Mid way through the second half Burns did look dangerous as they were having more shots on goal, but the good defence meant that these shots were not too threatening.

Burns goalkeeper, Carr, was the stand out, making some very good saves and keeping his side in the game.

The win however wasn't all good news for University of Canberra, with Scott Anderson being carried from the field 71 minutes into the game with suspected ligament damage.

University of Canberra's assistant coach Paul Davison wasn't getting too carried away with the win: "At least we com-

peted this week and played the 90 minutes, we made it hard for them to break us down, in contrast to last weeks game we are very happy"

A disappointed Burns coach, Steve Bryant said: "We needed 3 points to go through (to the semi-finals), we should have beat them basically."

"We did have 3 injuries but basically we didn't play, we didn't play at all."

George Lemon witnessed the Capital City Suns defeat Weston Creek Royals 3-1 in another round three action of the WIN TV Federation Cup at Deakin on Sunday

Both teams had little to play for after Tuggeranong United held Canberra Olympic to a 2-2 draw in the earlier match which was enough to give United top spot in the group and see them advance into next weeks semi-finals along with Olympic, who finished the competition as the highest placed runner-up.

Suns started the match in fine fashion and quickly had the Creek's defence rattled. After a number of unsuccessful raids, the Suns went one up in the 19th min through the boot of promising midfielder Dion Cannell.

Cannell received a well timed ball from Goran Josifovski and raced through four defenders before curving the ball past the Creek's goalie Thomsen. It was a sweet goal for Cannell, playing for the Suns against his old club for the first time.

Two minutes later Suns midfielder Tony Radic tore the heart out of the magpies. Radic set the goal up with a magic run down the right wing.

He then craftily guided the ball into the net with his left foot to give the Suns a 2-0 lead which they were able to hold onto going into the break.

Weston Creek gave their supporters some hope with a goal to substitute Tim Webb in the 70th min. However, the Suns struck back 10 minutes later after the little dynamo Sfevie Lee tapped in after his initial chip rebounded from a Magpie defender.

Suns coach Bill Dojcinowski was pleased to finish the series with a win.

"We narrowly lost our first match against tugguranong, then we came back last week to draw 3-3 with olympic, and now victory over Weston.

"I am very happy that we have improved with each game," Dojcinowski said.

For the Suns Tony Radic, Goran Josifovski, and Mills Sredojevic had big games whilst the Creeks keeper Thomsen put in a courageous effort.

Meanwhile Dojcinowski announced that the club had signed former Weston Creek striker Peter Haider. He had originally signed for Monaro but decided to leave them after playing only one Federation Cup match.

Nick Guoth was at Riverside Stadium in Queanbeyan to see Monaro play Belconnen United and ANU take on Gunghalin Juventus.

In the first match, Monaro defeated Belconnen United 3-1. Monaro struggled at the beginning but went 1 up before the break care of Frank Agnello. Obe Shadmaan scored early in the second for United to level the scores at 1-1. Monaro had Lee Pietrukovski was sent off, while Daryl North and Matt Julienne finished off the scoring.

ANU were struggling all the way against Gunghalin Juventus, going down 5-0.

A hatrick to Steve Lazzari came with a goal each to George Cattanach and John Glass, but the miss of the day went to Glass who was one-on-one with a defender and saw his shot deflected onto the upright and then into the keeper's hands.

This final round of results mean that Gunghalin Juventus, Tuggeranong United and Canberra Deakin advance through to the Federation Cup semi-finals as group winners. Canberra Olympic qualify as the fourth team as they were the highest placed runner-up.

BILL TURNER CUP COMING SOON TO INSIDE SOCCER



Handbook & Draw



**LG BILL TURNER CUP
15 YEARS SOCCER**

WA Night Series

By Brett Klucznik

Western Australia's pre-season competition, the Midland Brick Night Series is well under way for 2000. The states Premier League clubs have been drawn into two groups for the tournament.

In Group 1 there are Perth, Joondalup, Floreat Athena, Swan, Bayswater City and Cockburn City, while Group B consists of Sorrento, the Western Knights, Inglewood United (formerly Falcons), Fremantle City, Ashfield/Bunbury and Rockingham City in Group 2.

With the knock-out finals fast approaching, recently the defending Night Series champions Sorrento overrun a gallant Rockingham City with three second half goals.

The odds were always stacked against Rockingham and in the 16th minute their hopes took a further battering as goalkeeper Adrian Rawlings was forced off the pitch with a knee injury after colliding with Todd Harnwell - and with no substitute 'keeper on the bench, Stewart Francis donned the gloves.

Twenty minutes later the ledger appeared to have been evened somewhat after Sorrento were reduced to 10 men with the dismissal of Richard Turnbull for lashing out at an opponent.

But ten minutes after the re-start Rockingham were sent reeling when David Twigg was sent off for his second bookable offence of the night.

And from the resulting free-kick veteran striker Trevor Morgan sent the ball over Francis to give his side the lead.

Sorrento now took control of the game and were rewarded with two further goals - a 70th minute converted by Ross Greer and an extra-time tap-in from winger Todd Harnwell.

In the night's other match, Floreat Athena downed Swan 2 goals to nil.

Two days later the Western Knights left it until late to down Ashfield/Bunbury. Shane McNally put the Knights ahead in the second minute of play when he knocked in Scott Devine's flick-on.

But their elation was short-lived as defender Ric Antunes was sent off for dissent in the 14th minute. Ashfield then had a couple of great chances to equalise when Savo Garic drove a thunderbolt at goal which Knights' keeper Darren Williams did well to keep out, and Lee Pashley blasted over the bar from 2 metres when a simple tap-in would have got the desired result.

Steven Gillibrand finalised levelled the scores in the 37th minute with his first goal of the season.

The Knights came out fired up in the second half and both Dead Nicolauo and Joe Vaz had chances to put the side ahead. Vaz finally settled the match after 79 minutes when he reacted quickest inside the penalty area to pounce on a partially-blocked shot to hit the winner. In the other late game, Joondalup thrashed Bayswater 6-2 to keep its finals hopes alive.

Super League/First Div Round-up

The Super League clash at Jensen Park proved to be the classic 'game of two halves'. Bankstown fell behind to a penalty firmly put away by Jim Bakis for St George after a defender had handled inside the area in only the 10th minute.

The game was only another 11 minutes old when Angelo Petratos rose high to head home the second and Saints were looking towards another victory.

Bankstown were battling to stay in the game in the first half, but after the break they lay siege to the St George goal and missed a hatful of chances.

They managed to reduce the deficit in the 76th minute from a superb 30 yard volley by George Issa, but their wayward finishing inside the six yard box brought them undone and they were unable to turn their second half superiority into any points at all on the day.

Super League Top Goal-Scorers after Round 10

Johnny Ghisso Bonnyrigg 10
Steve Karavatakis Leichhardt 10

Joe Bruni Leichhardt 8

Jimmy Aschner Eastern Suburbs 7

Nikolce Joseski Parramatta 7

Mark Hagger Blacktown 6

Adam Anderson Parramatta 6

Jim Bakis St George 6



In First Division Rockdale City Suns followed up their 3-0 win at Bathurst a week ago with an identical scoreline against Ryde City back at home, but it was an even game until a controversial goal was awarded to the home side 15 minutes after the break.

A Rockdale player appeared to be standing on the line, with both the keep-

er and last defender stranded well out from the goalmouth, when Antony Adamo latched onto a ball parried to his feet by keeper Andrew Prentice.

The Rockdale player buried his shot through the legs of his team mate, who stood beside the post.

Then Spase Najdoski got on the end of a good pass to post the second in the 71st and Adamo wrapped it up with another good strike near the end of a game Ryde could have won themselves with better finishing.

Having said that, Ryde keeper Prentice was left constantly exposed to the livewire Rockdale strikers by a somewhat pedestrian defence and was forced to make a series of reflex, point blank saves, with his opposite number far less busy on the day.

Rockdale are clearly a stronger side than last year after their positive start, while Ryde will take some time to regroup after losing their Super League status at the end of last season.

NSW RESULTS

FEDERATION DIVISION ONE: FIRST GRADE: Illawarra Lions, Dulwich Hill Washed Out: Hajduk Wanderers, Hurstville City Minotaurs Washed Out: AC United, Auburn United Washed Out: Rockdale City Suns 3(S Najdoski 71m, A Adamo 59/83m), Ryde City Gunners 0: Fraser Park, Bathurst '75 Washed Out: Stanmore Hawks, M.S.C. Liverpool Washed Out. **UNDER 21:** Illawarra Lions, Dulwich Hill Washed Out: Hajduk Wanderers, Hurstville City Minotaurs Washed Out: AC United, Auburn United Washed Out: Rockdale City Suns 1, Ryde City Gunners 4: Fraser Park, Bathurst '75 Washed Out: Stanmore Hawks, M.S.C. Liverpool Washed Out. **UNDER 18:** Illawarra Lions, Dulwich Hill Washed Out: Hajduk Wanderers, Hurstville City Minotaurs Washed Out: AC United, Auburn United Washed Out: Rockdale City Suns 0, Ryde City Gunners 4: Fraser Park, Bathurst '75 Washed Out: Stanmore Hawks, M.S.C. Liverpool Washed Out.

FEDERATION DIVISION TWO: FIRST GRADE: Belmore Hercules, Sydney University Washed Out: Mt Pritchard, Greystanes Washed Out: University of NSW, Mt Druitt Town Rangers Washed Out: Sydney District, Hakoah Washed Out: Central Coast Lakers, Hills United Washed Out: White City, Hurstville ZSC Washed Out. **UNDER 21:** Belmore Hercules, Sydney University Washed Out: Mt Pritchard, Greystanes Washed Out: University of NSW, Mt Druitt Town Rangers Washed Out: Sydney District, Hakoah Washed Out: Central Coast Lakers, Hills United Washed Out: White City, Hurstville ZSC Washed Out. **UNDER 18:** Belmore Hercules, Sydney University Washed Out: Mt Pritchard, Greystanes Washed Out: University of NSW, Mt Druitt Town Rangers Washed Out: Sydney District, Hakoah Washed Out: Central Coast Lakers, Hills United Washed Out: White City, Hurstville ZSC Washed Out.

FEDERATION DIVISION THREE: FIRST GRADE: The Wanderers 4, Balmain 1: Colo Colo, Prairiewood United Washed Out: Prospect United, Liverpool City Washed Out: Holy Cross Ryde, Parramatta City Washed Out: Trasandinos, Nepean District Washed Out: Western Sydney Lions, Camden Tigers Washed Out. **RESERVE GRADE:** The Wanderers 4, Balmain 0: Colo Colo, Prairiewood United Washed Out: Prospect United, Liverpool City Washed Out: Holy Cross Ryde, Parramatta City Washed Out: Trasandinos, Nepean District Washed Out: Western Sydney Lions, Camden Tigers Washed Out.

FEDERATION DIVISION FOUR: FIRST GRADE: Kellyville Koits, CSI Schofields Washed Out: Sporting SCC, Maroubra United Washed Out: Sydney Crescent Star 6, Granville Greenisland 1: Marrickville 1, Hawkesbury City 2: United Eagles 7, Auburn Star 0: Eastern Creek Pioneers, Springwood Washed Out. **RESERVE GRADE:** Kellyville Koits, CSI Schofields Washed Out: Sporting SCC, Maroubra United Washed Out: Sydney Crescent Star 10, Granville Greenisland 0: Marrickville 3, Hawkesbury City 2: United Eagles 6, Auburn Star 1: Eastern Creek Pioneers, Springwood Washed Out.

FEDERATION DIVISION FIVE: FIRST GRADE: Lithgow Workmen 4, Kosciusko 2: Bossy 1, Petersham 2: Hinchinbrook Chiefs, Birrong Sports Washed Out: Liverpool Olympic 0, Fairfield City 3: UTS, Western Sydney Passion Washed Out. **RESERVE GRADE:** Lithgow Workmen 4, Kosciusko 0: Bossy 3, Petersham 3: Hinchinbrook Chiefs, Birrong Sports Washed Out: Liverpool Olympic 3, Fairfield City 4: UTS, Western Sydney Passion Washed Out.

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE: FIRST GRADE: CSI Schofields, Bathurst City Washed Out: UTS, Hajduk Wanderers Washed Out: St George Association, Gladesville Hornsby Koalas Washed Out. **GRADE 19:** CSI Schofields, Bathurst City Washed Out: UTS, Hajduk Wanderers Washed Out: St George Association, Gladesville Hornsby Koalas Washed Out.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: GRADE 13: Eastern Suburbs Wanderers, Sutherland Sharks Washed Out: Northern Spirit, Bonnyrigg White Eagles Washed Out: Macarthur Rams, Sydney United Washed Out: Sydney Olympic, St George Washed Out: Parramatta Eagles, Marconi Stallions Washed Out: Penrith Panthers, Central Coast Coasties Washed Out: Manly Warringah Dolphins 1, Newcastle Breakers 1: Bankstown City Cubs 1, Wollongong Wolves 1: Fairfield Bulls, Canterbury Marrickville Washed Out: Leichhardt Tigers, Blacktown City Demons Washed Out. **GRADE 14:** Eastern Suburbs Wanderers, Sutherland Sharks Washed Out: Northern Spirit, Bonnyrigg White Eagles Washed Out: Macarthur Rams, Sydney United Washed Out: Sydney Olympic, St George Washed Out: Parramatta Eagles, Marconi Stallions Washed Out: Penrith Panthers, Central Coast Coasties Washed Out: Manly Warringah Dolphins 0, Newcastle Breakers 3: Bankstown City Cubs 3, Wollongong Wolves 1: Fairfield Bulls, Canterbury Marrickville Washed Out: Leichhardt Tigers, Blacktown City Demons Washed Out. **GRADE 15:** Eastern Suburbs Wanderers, Sutherland Sharks Washed Out: Northern Spirit, Bonnyrigg White Eagles Washed Out: Macarthur Rams, Sydney United Washed Out: Sydney Olympic, St George Washed Out: Parramatta Eagles, Marconi Stallions Washed Out: Penrith Panthers, Central Coast Coasties Washed Out: Manly Warringah Dolphins 1, Newcastle Breakers 2: Bankstown City Cubs 2, Wollongong Wolves 1: Fairfield Bulls, Canterbury Marrickville Washed Out: Leichhardt Tigers, Blacktown City Demons Washed Out.

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE: GRADE 13: Ryde City, Southern Branch Washed Out: Blacktown Association, Nepean Association Washed Out: Hills United, Rockdale City Suns Washed Out: AC United, Stanmore Hawks Washed Out: Illawarra Lions, Canterbury Association Washed Out: Mt Pritchard, Hajduk Wanderers Washed Out. **GRADE 14:** Ryde City, Southern Branch Washed Out: Blacktown Association, Nepean Association Washed Out: Hills United, Rockdale City Suns Washed Out: AC United, Stanmore Hawks Washed Out: Illawarra Lions, Canterbury Association Washed Out: Mt Pritchard, Hajduk Wanderers Washed Out. **GRADE 15:** Ryde City, Southern Branch Washed Out: Blacktown Association, Nepean Association Washed Out: Hills United, Rockdale City Suns Washed Out: AC United, Stanmore Hawks Washed Out: Illawarra Lions, Canterbury Association Washed Out: Mt Pritchard, Hajduk Wanderers Washed Out. **GRADE 16:** Ryde City, Southern Branch Washed Out: Blacktown Association, Nepean Association Washed Out: Hills United, Rockdale City Suns Washed Out: AC United, Stanmore Hawks Washed Out: Illawarra Lions, Canterbury Association Washed Out: Mt Pritchard, Hajduk Wanderers Washed Out.

DIVISION TWO YOUTH LEAGUE: GRADE 13: Central Coast Lakers, Camden Tigers Washed Out: Mt Druitt Town Rangers, CSI Schofields Washed Out: M.S.C. Liverpool, Granville Association Washed Out: Ku-Ring-Gai Association, Hawkesbury City Washed Out: Parramatta City, Hurstville City Minotaurs Washed Out. **GRADE 14:** Central Coast Lakers, Camden Tigers Washed Out: Mt Druitt Town Rangers, CSI Schofields Washed Out: M.S.C. Liverpool, Granville Association Washed Out: Ku-Ring-Gai Association, Hawkesbury City Washed Out: Parramatta City, Hurstville City Minotaurs Washed Out. **GRADE 15:** Central Coast Lakers, Camden Tigers Washed Out: Mt Druitt Town Rangers, CSI Schofields Washed Out: M.S.C. Liverpool, Granville Association Washed Out: Ku-Ring-Gai Association, Hawkesbury City Washed Out: Parramatta City, Hurstville City Minotaurs Washed Out. **GRADE 16:** Central Coast Lakers, Camden Tigers Washed Out: Mt Druitt Town Rangers, CSI Schofields Washed Out: M.S.C. Liverpool, Granville Association Washed Out: Ku-Ring-Gai Association, Hawkesbury City Washed Out: Parramatta City, Hurstville City Minotaurs Washed Out.

SUPER CADET LEAGUE: GRADE 11: Central Coast Coasties 2, Penrith Panthers 1: Eastern Suburbs Wanderers, Sutherland Sharks Washed Out: Northern Spirit 1, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0: Macarthur Rams, Sydney United Washed Out: Sydney Olympic, St George Washed Out: Marconi Stallions, Parramatta Eagles Washed Out: Leichhardt Tigers, Blacktown City Demons Washed Out: Bankstown City Cubs 0, Wollongong Wolves 2: Fairfield Bulls, Canterbury Marrickville Washed Out. **GRADE 12:** Central Coast Coasties 1, Penrith Panthers 1: Eastern Suburbs Wanderers, Sutherland Sharks Washed Out.

SUPER LEAGUE SOCCER THIS SUNDAY AFTERNOON 19TH MARCH AT

MELITA STADIUM PARRAMATTA EAGLES

V SUTHERLAND SHARKS

SEE SUPER LEAGUE'S POWERFUL EAGLES TAKE ON THE SHARKS

FIRST GRADE 5PM - UNDER 21 3PM - UNDER 18 1PM

ADULTS \$10 - STUDENT & PENSIONERS \$5
KIDS UNDER 16 \$2

Coasties snatch exciting 2-2 draw

CENTRAL COAST 2

Matthews 85, Peaty 89.

PARRAMATTA EAGLES 2

Delicata 8, Josevski 82.

At Plum Park, Central Coast. Crowd 513.

There's an old saying 'the show's not over until the fat lady sings!'. The soccer equivalent is 'the game's not over until the referee blows the final whistle!'

Parramatta Eagles learnt that lesson last Saturday night at Plum Park when they led Central Coast Coasties two goals to nil with eight minutes remaining and were fortunate to finish with a two-all draw.

This match was always going to be competitive - the Coasties returning to the early season form when they had wins away from home over Canterbury and Parramatta after a come from behind win over competition leaders Blacktown.

The match started like a house on fire with both goalkeepers having to make saves within the first five minutes.

Coasties defender Shaun Matthews then headed away a Scott Xuereb cross that had evaded Garry Meier.

Three minutes later Eagles goalie Jason Holmes (an ex-Coastie) made a quick long clearance that found Adam Anderson on the right who passed to Ben Delicata. Brent Demery appeared to hesitate before tackling and Delicata had time to slide the ball under Meier to give the Eagles an early lead.

The visitors maintained the pressure and Stephen Chipps headed across the Coasties goal just out of reach of an onrushing Niko Joseski.

The Coasties resettled and gradually got into their stride. Peter Preston, last year's Super League Player of the Year, put Paul Roberts away and his goal bound shot was deflected away for a corner.

The Eagles counter attacked and Chipps picked up a loose ball forcing Meier to make a great save from well struck shot.

Two minutes later a Delicata header was fumbled by Meier and he was forced to make a desperate recovering save.

It was soon the turn of the Coasties - a Preston corner found Dane Hokin whose cross-goal pass just eluded Roberts.

The remainder of the first half saw the

Coasties camped in the Eagles half. Nathan Byrn, Adam Peatey, Roberts and Preston each saw goal attempts go well wide or well saved by Holmes.

The second half saw the Eagles again under pressure for the first ten minutes. The visitors withstood the consistent Coasties attacks and both teams then appeared to put their faith in counter attacking football in their endeavour for that elusive goal.

Eight minutes to go and no reward for either team up to that point but the fireworks were about to be unleashed.

Parramatta attacked and somehow drew Meier out of his goal, with Joseski ending up with the ball and he had no trouble putting the ball into an empty net.

The Eagles were elated - they had it won! The Coasties supporters were downcast - 'here we go again, another home defeat! But, remember the old saying ...

Five minutes to go and the Coasties were attacking furiously. Peaty crossed and up went Matthews to head the ball into the goal.

Could it happen? The Coasties said yes - the fat lady hadn't sung yet!

Another Coastie attack - Peaty again got the ball and this time took the matter into his own hands. A well struck shot and the ball was in the back of the net.

The home were ecstatic while Parramatta, confident of a good away win, were shattered.

But it wasn't over yet! Peaty again got the ball but this time his shot was wide.

Finally the referee Greg Leverton blew his whistle to end an exciting game with the result being fair as neither team deserved to lose.

But the real hero of the night was the Plum Park curator. Despite a week of solid rain he had the pitch in first class condition and it was equal to or better than most Super League or National League pitches - congratulations to John Noble.

Central Coast Coasties: Meier, Matthews, Steele, Daley, Peatey, Demery, Sontag, Byrn, Roberts, Preston (Surrige), Hokin (Bennett).

Parramatta Eagles: Holmes, Xuereb, Reveley, Bazdaric, Trpkoski, Anderson (Panzarino), Mittiga, Joseski, Chipps, Delicata (Meilak), Borg.

Super League Tables

FIRST GRADE:	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
LEIGHHARDT TIGERS	9	6	1	2	26	14	19	12
St George Saints	10	6	1	3	19	14	19	5
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	9	6	0	3	26	19	18	7
Central Coast Coasties	10	5	3	2	19	12	18	7
Blacktown City Demons	9	5	1	3	26	9	16	17
Parramatta Eagles	10	4	4	2	22	16	16	6
Bankstown City Lions	10	4	3	3	16	11	15	5
Canterbury Marrickville	9	4	0	5	14	24	12	-10
Macarthur Rams	9	2	4	3	13	13	10	0
Eastern Suburbs	9	3	0	6	14	17	9	-3
Manly Warringah Dolphins	9	2	3	4	11	20	9	-9
Fairfield Bulls	9	2	2	5	13	17	8	-4
Sutherland Sharks	9	2	1	6	11	26	7	-15
Penrith Panthers	9	2	1	6	7	25	7	-18

UNDER 21	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	GD
CENTRAL COAST	10	6	2	2	16	11	20	5
Blacktown City Demons	9	5	3	1	19	12	18	7
Penrith Panthers	9	6	0	3	23	17	18	6
Parramatta Eagles	10	5	2	3	19	13	17	6
St George Saints	10	4	4	2	20	9	16	11
Leighardt Tigers	9	5	1	3	17	14	16	3
Manly Warringah Dolphins	9	4	1	4	19	17	13	2
Sutherland Sharks	9	3	3	3	14	19	12	-5
Eastern Suburbs	9	2	4	3	16	18	10	-2
Macarthur Rams	9	3	1	5	11	20	10	-9
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	9	2	3	4	11	15	9	-4
Canterbury Marrickville	9	3	0	6	16	23	9	-7
Fairfield Bulls	9	2	2	5	13	18	8	-5
Bankstown City Lions	10	1	2	7	17	25	5	-8

UNDER 18	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
PARRAMATTA EAGLES	10	7	1	2	28	14	22	14
Fairfield Bulls	9	7	0	2	21	11	21	10
Leighardt Tigers	9	6	2	1	24	14	20	10
Blacktown City Demons	9	6	2	1	18	8	20	10
Central Coast Coasties	10	5	2	3	26	17	17	9
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	9	4	2	3	13	8	14	5
Macarthur Rams	9	3	3	3	11	12	12	-1
Bankstown City Lions	10	3	2	5	14	23	11	-9
Penrith Panthers	9	2	4	3	12	10	10	2
Eastern Suburbs	9	2	4	3	13	20	10	-7
Sutherland Sharks	9	2	3	4	12	11	9	1
St George Saints	10	2	3	5	14	32	9	-18
Manly Warringah Dolphins	9	1	0	8	7	16	3	-9
Canterbury Marrickville	9	0	2	7	7	24	2	-17

FIRST GRADE: SUPER LEAGUE

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS
LEIGHARDT TIGERS
(Postponed)

SUTHERLAND SHARKS
CANTERBURY MARRICKVILLE
(Postponed)

CENTRAL COAST COASTIES 2
Matthews 85, Peatey 89.
PARRAMATTA EAGLES 2
Delicata 8, Josevski 82.

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS 1
Issa 76.
ST GEORGE SAINTS 2

Bakis 10, Petratos 21.
EASTERN SUBURBS
BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES
(Postponed)

FAIRFIELD BULLS
MACARTHUR RAMS
(Postponed)

MANLY WARRINGAH DOLPHINS
PENRITH PANTHERS
(Postponed)

UNDER 21:
Blacktown City Demons
Sutherland Sharks
Central Coast Coasties 0
Bankstown City Lions
Eastern Suburbs
Leighardt Tigers(PP)
Canterbury M'ville(PP)
Parramatta Eagles 3
St George Saints(PP)
Bonnyrigg WE(PP)

Fairfield Bulls
Manly Warringah Dolphins
Macarthur Rams(PP)
Penrith Panthers(PP)

UNDER 18:
Blacktown City Demons
Sutherland Sharks
Central Coast Coasties 5
Bankstown City Lions
Eastern Suburbs
Fairfield Bulls
Manly Warringah Dolphins
Leighardt Tigers(PP)
Canterbury M'ville(PP)
Parramatta Eagles 1
St George Saints(PP)
Bonnyrigg WE(PP)
Macarthur Rams(PP)
Penrith Panthers(PP)

WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE ROUND FOUR RESULTS

Nepean Association
NNorthern NSW/HAS
Marconi
Central Coast Lakers 0
Gladesville Ravens
Macarthur Rams(PP)
Manly Warringah(PP)
Wollongong W'ves(PP)
NSW Inst port/Acad 1
Sutherland Sharks(PP)

ROUND FIVE DRAW

Friday 17 March

NSW Inst Sport/Academy v Gladesville Ravens
Valentine Park 7:30 PM

Saturday 18 March

Wollongong Wolves v Sutherland Sharks
Brandon Park 5:00 PM 3:00 PM

Sunday 19 March

Macarthur Rams v Central Coast
Lynwood Park 7:30 PM 5:30 PM

Nepean Association v NNorthern NSW/HAS
Cook Park St Marys 6:00 PM 4:00 PM
Manly Warringah Dolphins v Marconi
Cromer Park 5:00 PM 3:00 PM

SUPER LEAGUE



ROUND TEN

Saturday 18 March

Blacktown City v Central Coast Coasties - Gabbie Stadium

Game 6.00pm (1st grade) - 4.00pm (21s) - 2.00pm (18s)

Bonnyrigg v Bankstown City Lions - Serbian Centre

Game 7.00pm (1st grade) - 5.00pm (21s) - 3.00pm (18s).

Macarthur Rams v Eastern Suburbs - Lynwood Park

Game 7.00pm (1st grade) - 5.00pm (21s) - 3.00pm (18s).

Sunday 19 March

St George Saints v Manly Warringah - St George Stadium

Canterbury Marrickville v Fairfield Bulls - Henson Park

Parramatta Eagles v Sutherland Sharks - Melita Stadium

Leighardt Tigers v Penrith Panthers - Lambert Park

Games 5.00pm (1st grade)-3.00pm (21s)-1.00pm (18s).

Catch all the latest news on football in
NSW in **Super Soccer OUT 16 March!**

www.soccernsw.com.au

Warren Spink: back where it all started

By Aidan Ormond

In the Victorian Premier League it is Green Gully Cavaliers that have got off to a flyer; five games five wins going into last weekend for the side from western Melbourne aiming for back-to-back championships. And given Victoria's 'first-past-the-post' system, the chasing pack will be keen not to let the green and whites, coached by the respected Ian Dobson, establish too much of a lead too soon.

One of those chasing teams is Bulleen. Coached by Australian Soccer legend Alan Davidson it is a young side that relies on experienced players like Socceroo striker Warren Spink to give it the balance it needs to push sides like Gully.

Added to that are the facilities. The ground is adjacent to the Veneto club, a booming social club. The grounds too are in the frame for status as SOCOG accredited training facilities for the Olympics.

Spink is in no doubt that Bulleen has the goods, but after arriving from VPL side Preston this season, just getting to know the names of his teammates has been a challenge for the 33-year-old 40-cap national team player ("I don't know half of the boys' last names!")

Getting fit has been the other. The club bought him knowing he was carrying a hip injury but sadly it has not responded to treatment, keeping Spink off the park for most of the start of this season (three 20 minute games thus far.)

"Honestly, there are so many good young players in the side," he explained while picking up his daughter from school, "particularly with guys like Joseph 'Rocky' Damiano who is only 16 and Birkan in midfield... Rocky is already playing in the centre of defence. He looks very mature."

Coach Alan Davidson concurred with Spink's assessment of Damiano. "I thought he was wasting his time in the U/16s. So I played him in the first team after about a week of bringing him into the first team squad."

"He is now playing regularly as a marker. He has good technique and he is a big strong boy."

"I dare say he has probably been one of our most consistent players. He's in form, it's simple. One thing I am a big believer in is that you can be in and out of form, but work-rate and determination is not negotiable."

Davidson will also have a 14-year-old training with the first team shortly, joining a number of other teenagers. "We've got Della Rocca out, Spinky out, Danny Gnjdic out of form ... it's a fine line between mid-table and top two. At the end of the day you can't worry about the Green Gullys of the world, even though they are the measuring stick."

"You go through ups and downs so we will keep doing the right things until the luck changes. Finishing is the problem at the moment," said Davidson.

Spink emphasized the importance of being physically strong - together with the ability - for younger players making their first steps in the Premier League.

"I think Australia produces an incredibly number of quality young players," added Spink.

Club President Michael Catalano reiterated this point when he said that the club "was building for its future."

"Davo," said Spink of his coach Alan Davidson, "has brought in a number of new guys so that takes time to gel, but Davo knows what he wants and has a wealth of experience which I think shows in his coaching."

"Obviously we have not got off to a flyer, but there is enough quality in the coaching and playing staff to turn things around," said the Hallam-raised Spink, who first played NSL in 1985 with Preston Macedonia.

"Facilities-wise, I think both Gully and Bulleen are the best credentialled and strongest financially in the Victorian Premier League. Bulleen is certainly very professional."

Striker Spink also noted that at the time he made his debut (with Doveton as a scrawny 15-year-old in 1981) the gap in standard between state and NSL footy was probably not as pronounced as it is now.

"There were a number of good quality British players who came out, and obviously some weren't as good. You certainly couldn't muck about at training with some of those guys though!"

The future for the youngster nicknamed 'Chukka', who started out 18 years ago at Doveton is where it all began.

"When I came back from Singapore I had a few offers but my daughter has just started school, so I think that as long as I stay fit I can keep playing Victorian Premier League football for a few more years."

In terms of playing strengths over the years, good facilities and some significant financial backing, Bulleen have shown all the hallmarks of a successful club, writes Inside Soccer's VPL writer Mark Fisher.

The outward image you are greeted with when you drive into the opulent confines of the Veneto Club is one of effort and achievement.

The Zebras' two premierships in the VPL (1993 and 1998) were hard-fought affairs, which nevertheless served to bolster their reputation as one of the toughest outfits going around.

Last season was a blot on their impressive VPL history to date, which includes six top three placings from eight seasons of Premier competition.

After a good start at the beginning of 1999, Bulleen were later blown away as Gully and Port Melbourne fought tooth and nail in a battle for first-past-the-post honours.

Bulleen ended up finishing in 6th position, seventeen points behind eventual champions Green Gully.

This season could well see a turnaround in the club's fortunes, however. The appointment of former Socceroo icon Alan Davidson as coach is evidence that the club's board has become impa-



Bulleen's Warren Spink (seen here in Preston's colours.) "Bulleen is certainly very professional."

tient with just being a chaser in the pack.

The acquisition of the tireless and perennial goal wizard Warren Spink, a former stalwart of Preston, is showing signs of reaping dividends on the points table, after 'Spinky' overcame a niggling early season injury.

Danny Gnjdic would have been a no-nonsense foil for Spink; that's if Gnjdic had stayed the season with Bulleen instead of choosing to leave after a fracas with coaching staff.

Sava Rusmir looks a good left flank player, who will offer useful service to Spink with his often well-weighted crosses. Rusmir scored four goals of his own last season.

It is in the defensive department that Bulleen will be a bit suspect. Goalkeeper Jamie Cooper will certainly have his work cut out against the likes of Gully's Becvinovski and Donev, not to mention Heidelberg's Opazo.

Their defence has not quite been as sharp since the departures of Tommy Sonsini (now at Port Melbourne) and Bill Tsiakos (currently with Oakleigh) a few seasons ago.

The Zebras may need to spend more time experimenting until they have their back-line up to scratch.

Amongst some of the other VPL coaches, the belief is that it will take Bulleen some time to gel and to click into gear this season, perhaps as late as Round 11, especially after the club underwent quite a few changes in personnel.

Whether they resolve this before the likes of Gully and Bentleigh totally get away on them is a matter of sheer speculation.

It is hard to find clubs in Victoria with anywhere near the depth of the Cavaliers and the Greens, and this could be a telling factor as attrition and card counts take their toll on the overall competition.

Bulleen should still finish in the top four by season's end, yet it had better start winning away as well as at home if it is going to make any inroads on the current league champions, who have gone 5-0-0 so far this season.

Alagiozidis' hat-trick keeps Sharks at bay

Oakleigh Cannons 3

Alagiozidis 22, 51, 55.

Port Melbourne Sharks 3

Tsaltas 17, 45, Collina 76.



Friday night at Jack

Edwards Reserve, Oakleigh.

By Steven Bricknell

On a perfect Melbourne night Oakleigh extended their winless streak to five after a 3-3 draw with the Port Melbourne Sharks in a game they were unlucky not to win.

The first chance of the game fell to Bill Nalpantidis who took advantage of a Sharks defensive error only to shoot wide after good pressure from Chris Roche in the visitors' goal.

Then on 17 minutes Port Melbourne took the lead. Joan Papas swooped on a terrible Cannons' goal kick to square the ball to Nick Tsaltas who calmly slotted the ball from 12 yards.

Oakleigh were level five minutes later after Ike Alagiozidis stole the ball from Palamaras before teasing the Port defence and blasting the ball into the top corner.

Oakleigh began to dominate play, managing to beat the Port Melbourne off-side trap on a number of occasions with Alagiozidis running riot on the right side, yet they were unable to break the deadlock.

Then right on half-time - and against the run of play - the Sharks regained the lead. Tsaltas let fly with a speculative shot from outside the area only to see it take a massive deflection off an Oakleigh defender to completely wrong foot Nick Koletsas in goal to put the visitors back in front.

In a frantic opening ten minutes of the second half the Cannons pushed hard for an equaliser. They were rewarded in the 51st minute when Juan Sestre played Alagiozidis through the Port defence and with only the 'keeper to beat he brushed the ball into the back of the net.

In the 55th minute Oakleigh almost took the lead when a screaming volley from 20 yards from Nalpantidis cannoned (pardon the pun!) off the woodwork.

Finally, just a minute later, the home side took a deserved lead. Marc Aretis beat the Sharks defence on the right side and sent over a teasing cross that was met by Alagiozidis who headed the ball over an advancing Roche for his hat-trick.

Port Melbourne by now were in disarray with the Cannons repeatedly looking to go two goals up.

Port coach Peter Tsolakis brought himself and Damian Collina on to try and breathe some life into the Sharks side.

The move paid dividends when in the 76th minute Sam Poutakiolis crossed brilliantly for Collina to head home from eight yards.

The match was heading for a draw but Oakleigh almost stole all three points when four minutes into injury time Alagiozidis let fly from twenty yards out only to see Roche parry the ball away.

Then in the resulting scramble he made another save to ensure Port Melbourne gained a point.

Oakleigh can take heart from their fine performance but for the Sharks they will need to improve dramatically if they are to threaten Green Gully next Friday night

OAKLEIGH CANNONS: Koletsas, Georgakopoulos, Rosman, Tsiakos, Karagiannis, Aridas, Harbis, Alagiozidis, Sastre, Nalpantidis (Strapelas 70), Aretis.

PORT MELBOURNE: Roche, Pir, Papadopoulos, Palamaras, Knezevic, Poutakiolis, Pappas J, Nicolic (Tsolakis 73), Tsaltas, Sonsini, Mihajlovic (Collina 67).

Referee: Robert Caminiti.

Todorovski's late equaliser gives Fawkner the Blues

Altona Magic 2

Trifunov 16", Todorovski 90"

Fawkner Blues 2

Stojcevski 5", Emmanuel 60"

Saturday night at Paisley Reserve, Altona.

By Mark Fisher

Altona may be a shadow of their championship-winning self from seasons past, yet they can still play attractive attacking football when required.

They were thoroughly tested by the

visitors Fawkner on Saturday night at Paisley Reserve, and the Blues must have felt hard done by to see Altona share the points with them after the dramatic final minute of the match.

With barely seconds to go, and with Fawkner clinging to a 2-1 lead, George Jolevski sent over-head a looping long ball, which fell between the striding substitute Johnny Cvetanovski and the late-arriving Fawkner goalkeeper Maurice Gonzalez.

Cvetanovski got to the ball first just inside the area, only to be met by a clumsy challenge from Gonzalez.



The free kick from the spot was taken, and converted, by Zokan Todorovski. The draw was probably the most appropriate outcome in the end, as each side matched the other in terms of chances created and possession.

Former Bulleen defender Robert Stojcevski got his team off to a frantic pace only five minutes into the match, when he sized up the goal from 25 metres out.

Unmarked and almost in line with Altona's defence, he fired a shot

that looked as good as anything seen in the VPL this season, with the ball sailing sweetly into the upper right corner of the net.

Altona didn't take long to respond. George Jolevski was ever-dangerous once again, and his corner in the 16th minute gave Toni Trifunov the chance to connect low and make the score 1-1.

The fireworks from the Moomba Festival in the distance was little distraction to the sparks flying on the pitch at Altona, with plenty of chances unable to be put away throughout the remaining thirty minutes of the first half.

The best player on the park was former Olyroo Ace Stojcevski, who completely dominated down the left flank for the entire match.

Agim Sherifovski for Fawkner came very close to scoring in the 42nd minute when he headed hard at goal from a Peter Bordignon corner, drawing a fumbling save from Darren McGrath.

In the second half, the Blues regained the lead through Santo Emmanuel, who found the back of the net after McGrath made a poor effort at clearing an Eric Vassiliadis corner.

A total of five substitutions later (two for Fawkner and three for Altona), George Jolevski received a yellow card for a studs up tackle from behind on Sherifovski. He put that infringement out of his mind to try and set up the draw for the Magic. Ultimately, his team got out of jail to salvage some pride in the minds of their



fans.

ALTONA MAGIC:

McGrath, Jolevski, Bozinovski (Josevski), Ristevski (Cvetanovski), Micevski, Lisolajski, Trifunov, Stojcevski (Trpcovski), Todorovski, Mrkela, Markovski.

FAWKNER BLUES:

Gonzalez, Tramontana, Stojcevski, Vazzocetti, Schipano, Vassiliadis, Bordignon, Panebianco (De Santis), Emmanuel (Murphy), Psaros (Luci), Sherifovski.

Best Players:

3 - STOJEVSKI (ALTONA)
2 - Stojcevski (Fawkner)
1 - Jolevski (Altona)

FIRST GRADE VPL RESULTS

OAKLEIGH CANNONS 3

Alagiozidis (3).

PORT MELBOURNE SHARKS 3

Tsaltas 2, Collina.

ALTONA MAGIC 2

Trifunov, Todorovski.

FAWKNER BLUES 2

Stojcevski, Emmanuel.

ST ALBANS SAINTS 2

Vojtek, Sianidis

PRESTON LIONS 0

PLAYED MONDAY NIGHT:

BULLEEN ZEBRAS

BENTLEIGHT GREENS

HEIDELBERG UNITED

ALTONA EAST PHOENIX

MELBOURNE RAIDERS

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS

RESERVES:

Oakleigh 0

Port Melbourne 3

Altona Magic 3

Fawkner Blues 2

St Albans Saints 2 Preston Lions 2

PLAYED MONDAY NIGHT:

Bulleen Zebras v Bentleigh Greens

Heidelberg United v Altona Phoenix

Melbourne Raiders v Green Gully

FIRST GRADE

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS

St Albans Saints
Altona East Phoenix
Preston Lions
Fawkner Blues
Bentleigh Greens
Port Melb. Sharks
Altona Magic
Melbourne Raiders
Bulleen Zebras
Oakleigh Cannons
Heidelberg United

P	W	D	L	F	A	P
5	5	0	0	16	2	15
6	3	2	1	13	8	11
5	3	1	1	5	5	10
6	2	2	3	9	9	8
6	2	2	2	7	8	8
5	2	1	2	8	5	7
6	2	1	3	13	16	7
6	1	3	2	9	12	6
5	1	2	2	6	7	5
5	1	2	2	6	8	5
6	1	2	3	7	13	5
5	1	0	4	8	14	3

RESERVES

PORT M. SHARKS

Bentleigh Greens
Green Gully Cav
St Albans Saints
Altona Magic
Altona East Phoenix
Fawkner Blues
Preston Lions
Melbourne Raiders
Heidelberg United
Oakleigh Cannons
Bulleen Zebras

P	W	D	L	F	A	P
6	4	2	0	16	7	14
5	4	0	1	21	3	12
5	3	1	1	16	6	10
6	2	4	0	13	8	10
6	2	2	2	14	18	8
5	2	2	1	7	9	8
6	2	1	3	14	18	7
6	1	3	2	20	13	6
5	1	2	2	12	13	5
5	0	3	2	5	19	3
6	0	2	4	4	20	2
5	0	1	4	7	16	1

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE



ROUND SEVEN

Friday 17 March

Port Melbourne Sharks v Green Gully Cavaliers
SS Anderson Reserve - 8.15(First Grade)/6.15(Reserves)

Sunday 19 March

Fawker Blues v Oakleigh - CB Smith Reserve
Preston Lions v Altona Magic - BT Connor Reserve
Alton East Phoenix v St Albans Saints - Paisley Reserve
Bentleigh Greens v Heidelberg United - Kingston Heath SC
5.00(First Grade)/3.00(Reserves)

Monday 20 March

Bulleen Zebras v Melbourne Raiders - Veneto Club
8.15(First Grade)/6.15Reserves)

Alan Davidson at 40

Davo's reflections on life, love and being an Australian Soccer star

By Aidan Ormond

I can't believe Alan Davidson is 40. It seems like only yesterday that I was hurrying down to read the news about the '79 Australian youth team's exploits in the WYC qualifier in Asuncion, Paraguay. That class of '79 - featuring the likes of Davidson, Eddie Krncevic, George Christopoulos and Theo Selemides - was the first in a succession of Young Socceroo line-ups over the last 20 years that have done Australian soccer proud.

Since 1979 Alan Davidson, from working class Altona in Melbourne, has become one of Australia's most respected Socceroos both here and overseas; earning the tag of the 'Aussie Maradona' and going on to play for Nottingham Forest and in Asia.

One enduring memory - among many - was of playing against him in a friendly in the early eighties, and hearing the young Davo screaming at legendary '74 Socceroo Branko Buljevic for not chasing back after possession was lost. 'Davo' was a player that cared little for reputations - friendly or no friendly - his game was of commitment. Full on, all the time.

That was why he was so successful. If life does begin at 40 then for Alan Davidson it is a time to assess his life. And what is important is family.

He is now no longer consumed by the game. He is able to see the bigger picture, perhaps even to understand life more.

"Life and quality of life" he said thoughtfully, "is what we (all) aspire to. I suppose I am in a transitional stage. My wife and I live for our children now."

"I may not have been spending enough time with my children in the past. It's something I'm trying to come to grips with."

"My son said to me the other day, 'dad I haven't seen you for two days', and I said well I've been in meetings and training with the club. My career was great from a footballing and financial point of view, but now it's the family that is the priority."

"My son is starting to play soccer now but it is a bit frustrating for me that I can't spend more time with my children. You work all day then you're at training and come home. It takes a big chunk of time out of your life."

"I love soccer but at the same time I now have a family and children ... soccer is not my entire life now and I guess I can do without the game, even though I love it so much. Maybe I am getting older and more mature."

"I think you're obsessed with football when you're in it but once you're out of it doesn't affect me so much and there is so much to do outside of the game."

"I don't miss soccer playing one iota. I was very comfortable when I retired. That sounds stupid doesn't it, yet it's the truth."

"Once you've lost your desire then you're wasting your time."

"One thing I have learned though is not to depend on soccer. My lifestyle does not change because of soccer. I learnt that from a lot of people who finished play-

ing and had nothing to fall back on or were in the game because there was nothing else."

Davidson is a former electrician, restaurateur, and has run an electrical contracting business as well as his current transport business.

"My day job is just a means to an end. I have bills that have to be paid and the job ensures a certain lifestyle for my family."

"I am sure we all would like to not work and go on holiday in Bali!"

Having said that, he still is involved in the game he has a love for. Davidson coaches Bulleen in the VPL.

Davidson also runs a transport business that "basically runs itself", does the occasional bit of media work with C7 Optus and he has a family with two kids "which I don't see too much of."

"My kids (eight and six) are at schooling age now and we want stability for them. Their education is the priority plus we wanted to come back home (from Malaysia) and spend time with our families and our children," said Davidson.

The Socceroo midfielder spent six years in Malaysia, where his lifestyle was idyllic.

"Malaysia was great with the lifestyle and all the financial benefits associated with it. But in the six years there was also a lot of pressure ... you have to perform,

"I remember Oscar Crino was coaching Preston some time ago. He had invited me down, but he was copping so much abuse, spitting on him, that I asked him 'Oscar, what the hell are you doing here?' And he said 'Davo', if I don't do this I don't eat'. And I learnt from that ... it stuck in my mind."

particularly if you are a foreign player. If you didn't you were out because they were ruthless over there."

"You had to look after yourself. No late nights, you had to eat well and live well. In Malaysia I was home with the kids all day, while here I am working all day."

In the 80s Davidson almost died on a soccer pitch. The incident - which received widespread coverage in Melbourne - occurred while he was playing for South Melbourne at Middle Park. He swallowed his tongue but, thanks to the quick thinking of a fan who ran onto the park, a potential fatality was averted.

Perhaps this was a watershed for Davidson's perspective on life?

"Life," reflected Davidson, "is full of good and bad experiences. From that incident I have had to take medication. I look back on it as part and parcel of the game. You have to just get on with it. I am grateful that it wasn't worse. Life has hurdles and you just have to overcome them."

"From that incident it made me appreciate more life and health. Which goes back to what I was saying earlier, some people live and breath soccer ... I believe soccer is not everything. For me it was a job that I worked at. The love of the game was not the same as when you were playing with your mates in the park. It became a job."

"The one thing I have learned though



Davo with Peter Katholos (left) after the Socceroos held England to a 0-0 draw in 1983.

is not to depend on soccer."

"I am also trying to come to grips with the fact that I haven't spent as much time with my children as I should have."

"What do I really want?" asked Davidson rhetorically. "Do I want to spend more time with my children or do I continue in coaching? These things, there are no answers to them, you just feel your way through it."

"Having said all that, life's good and I'm grateful I am healthy."

"I'm maturing all the time. Every day I am learning things. My wife is younger than I am but she is teaching me things about life and the children."

"These are areas I have to learn about because I haven't been focussed in these areas before. I think sports people you hear they couldn't handle life and just fell apart after their careers... their life's empty."

"I like to think I am one of the lucky ones. I pushed myself out of the game and I am heading in other directions. We aspire to other things."

"I don't get personal satisfaction from working, it is not a passion but a means to an end."

As a coach 'Davo' describes his approach as "methodical".

"There are times when I've lost my temper though and I'm frustrated. Moods change with circumstances. I can be vocal if I have to be. It's not about going crazy. Some guys though turn into a shell and some need pumping up."

"The measuring stick is results though."

"Coaching?" he asked. "It's a mug's game! I sometimes ask myself is this really what I want?"

Given that many coaches move around for their job, this is something that has turned Davidson away from NSL coaching.

"I'm not prepared to move interstate or overseas. I've seen too many marriages break up because of travelling for your job and I'm not prepared to do that and let my family suffer. I want some stability for them."

"If you're relying on soccer for a living you're placing your bets on the wrong horse."

"I have choices so I don't need to rely on soccer."

"I remember Oscar Crino was coaching Preston some time ago. He had invited me down, but he was copping so much abuse, spitting on him, that I asked him 'Oscar, what the hell are you doing here?' And he said 'Davo', if I don't do this I don't eat'. And I learnt from that; it stuck in my mind."

"This game in Australia has jealousy, discontentment and politics and I'm not prepared to go through all that bullshit."

Last sightings Davidson had of Crino, the majestic Argentine-born Socceroo with the audacious midfield skills, was of him stacking shelves at a department store.

"In soccer you don't make money in Australia. So you have to make the most of the opportunities outside of soccer. As I get older soccer has taken a back step. I have to help prepare my kids' road."

"I'm looking for differing values in life. Mine are changing from the sporting to the family arena."

I am trying, he emphasized.

"Now I'm trying to find the balance in life. My life is my children. It's coming from the heart. To me life is really good. Soccer is only a vehicle."

"In ten to 15 years time, if you interview me I hope I will just be happy healthy. If I can say that I'm on the right track. Well there's not too much you can ask for, is there?"

Alan Davidson's Aussie file

1979-86: Sth Melb - 155 games/13 goals

1987-91/92: Melb. Knights - 133/2

94/95-95/96: Sth Melb - 15/0

96/97: Collingwood - 10/0

97/98 Melb. Knights 13/0

TOTAL: 326/15

Socceroos: 'A' appearances/goals - 50/2

U/20: 6/0 (1979 WYC campaign)

Matildas head to Gold Coast

By Anissa Tann-Darby

After the recent decision by the Nigerian Football Association to call off their tour to Australia and the proposed three match series, the staff of the Matildas decided that a change of training scenery would be beneficial in the continued push towards a successful Olympic campaign.

So, after much deliberation, the coaching and administration staff decided that with the autumn breeze settling over Canberra a trip north would do the team a world of good. Not that any of the girls would mind when various places in Queensland were mentioned, however some suggestions of Bali and Hawaii were a bit unrealistic but as the saying goes if you don't try!

Chris Tanzey and Ian Murray, our two

Sanders has been an outstanding acquisition to our overall staff structure and is extremely professional in her approach to her role. The girls cannot believe how efficient she is and nothing is a bother.

Thursday Depart AIS 8.00

Travel 1.00

Lunch

Training 3-5.00

Pool 5.30-6.00

Dinner

Friday

Breakfast 8.00

Training 10-12.00

Gym 12-1.00

Lunch / Dinner

Saturday

Breakfast 7.30

Meeting 8.00

Game 10.00

Pool recovery 12.30-1.00

Lunch/Dinner

Sunday

Breakfast 9.00

Meeting 10.00

Recovery

Lunch/Dinner

Monday

Breakfast 8.00

Gym 10-11.30

Lunch

Training 3-5.00

Pool 5-5.30

Dinner

Tuesday

Breakfast 9.00

Training 10.30 -11 (speed and agility)

Lunch

Meeting

Game

Wednesday

Breakfast 9.00

Recovery 10-10.30

Meeting

Lunch

Review

Thursday

Review

Friday

Breakfast 7.00

Gym 8.00

10.30 leave

This will be the basis of our time in Southport, however on top of this training load there will be team psychology with Rachael Harrigan, video analysis and a number of other activities that will also help us as a team.

Our whole program will obviously be under the watchful eye of our head coach Tanzey, however he will be helped by our strength and conditioning coach Stuart Cormack, physio Ed Hollis how can we forget, our assistant coach Ian Murray.

Hopefully after watching Gi Jane the other week I will be ready for any training camp!

Matildas Calendar Winners

1: Grahame Kemp

Wallsend, NSW

2: Matt Speranza

Carlingford

NSW

Congratulations gentlemen, a Global edition Matildas Calendar will be sent this week courtesy of Inside Soccer and www.worldfootball.com.au

Next week national coach

Chris Tanzey with Aidan Ormond



coaches, quickly assured us that this would just be an alternate training venue and that our training would remain as strict as ever, however I think that going to Queensland is a great idea.

A number of the girls have now been in the Institute program for almost two years and two years of Canberra isn't what you would call my cup of coffee.

Although the training is great and the facilities are superb, when you have been a Sydney resident for thirty years there just seems to be a bit more excitement on offer in Sydney.

Also there didn't seem to be any complaints from any of the girls that formerly resided in Queensland.

Our training structure will remain the same and probably be more intense than usual as after this training camp the team have been allowed to have about 11 days off to go back home to their families and loved ones.

A couple of games have been set down over the week so that we can stay with our current structure of playing two games a week in a bid to fast track our learning process and fitness so that by the time the Olympic games come around the Matildas will be a force to be reckoned with.

I have outlined a rough schedule of our training camp itinerary so that people can see just how much work, not only the girls are putting in to their Olympic preparation but also all the coaching staff and especially the administration.

Our new High Performance Manager Jo

Mark Silic



With Danlola

Inside Soccer's social affairs correspondent in Melbourne, Daniela Raco, caught up with Knights' sensation Mark Silic, first asking him if the current crop of Knights can repeat the deeds of past stars at Somers St.

Yes. If they get the hunger I'm sure they can win similar successful championships. But, this will come with more experience.

Can you recall the celebrations after being crowned the national champions?

It was crazy! The first win lasted about a week without sleep. The second I didn't play but I know celebrations were just as big.

You made an impressive return to Knights stadium this season after playing two seasons in Germany. Given the competitive nature of the German second Bundesliga, vying for a spot there must have been tough?

It was probably the toughest time of my life.

There are a growing number of Aussie soccer players playing their trade in Germany at the moment, did you have a chance to hit the night clubs with former Knights players Frank Juric and Joe Simunic?

I caught up with Frank fairly often for a couple of drinks and the usual boys' stuff!

There is a rumour that a possible transfer to a Portuguese club may be on the cards. Is the creative talent of Mark Silic likely to leave our shores in the coming weeks?

Not yet. If I go it will be at the end of the season ready for their next season.

The Croatian community has long provided the backbone of the club. What changes are in place to build on this supporter base and bring the passion back to Somers Street?

To be successful on the park.

Earlier in the season I interviewed Zeljko Susa, while he is exciting to watch on the pitch, few would know that back in high school he was a member of an R&B band called '15 Degrees West'. Does he ever offer to sing a few tunes as part of your teams pre match entertainment?

It's good that he doesn't, because he's not bad with a soccer ball and he should stick to it.

Have you thought about a career after soccer?

Possibly coaching.

Does Mark Silic have a favourite referee?

No. I hate them all.

Who is the funniest character in the game today?

Fausto De Amicis.

If you could have any supernatural power what would it be?



I've got it all. Ha! Ha! Are you a boxers or briefs guy?

Boxers.

Do you have a favourite night spot?

Heat on Sunday night.

Have you experienced any embarrassing moments on the field?

Tripping over the ball.

How would you describe yourself as a player?

Still learning a lot.

Describe your ideal woman?

Everyone is half decent when I'm drunk.

Complete this sentence 'love is.....'

I don't know.

What would you consider a romantic night out?

Taking a girl to the 'Golden Arches'.

Has this ever been played out?

Yes. I was taking my ex out to dinner, and I stopped by Maccas as a joke.

What is the biggest misconception about sportsmen?

That they're the nicest people out.

Which member of your squad would top Cleo's most eligible bachelors list?

Joey Rajher.

Where would you rate?

Top 5.

Do you follow and pre match rituals or superstitions?

I lead a sportsman's life three days before a game.

Which member of the Knights' squad is most likely to be caught dancing on a podium at a night club?

Zeljko Susa.

What is your most cherished possession?

I have a cross from Croatia tied around my neck.

Oldest 10 NSL players

Like a fine wine ...



By Andrew Howe

1. BOBBY CHARLTON

LAST NSL GAME: for Blacktown City against St George (W4-2) 9 March 1980 at Gabbie Stadium, Sydney. Crowd: 3478.

AGED: 42 years 150 days

In the first round of the 1980 season, newly promoted Blacktown City gained the services of England's hero of the 1966 World Cup in his second guest appearance in the NSL.

The Manchester United icon scored Blacktown's first goal against St George in the sixth minute, making him also the league's oldest all time goal scorer. Charlton previously played one game for Newcastle KB United in 1978 - which pulled in 16,251 at Newcastle's International Sports Centre.

2. RON CORRY

LAST NSL GAME: for Marconi against Blacktown City (L0-1) 26 August 1981 at Marconi Stadium, Sydney. Crowd: 3000.

AGED: 40 years 36 days

Corry was Australia's first-choice goalkeeper from 1967 to 1973 and had effectively retired from regular weekly competition after playing with Sutherland in 1977.

He was recruited by Marconi in 1979 as backup 'keeper to Allan Maher. Corry

stood in for Maher for one game in 1980 and five games in 1981, both stints played while Maher - another former Sutherland and Socceroo player - was injured.

3. PETER BEARDSLEY (below right)

LAST NSL GAME*: for Melbourne Knights against South Melbourne 5 March 2000 at Knights Stadium, Melbourne.

AGED*: 39 years 47 days

* due to play one more game

This was Beardsley's first of a scheduled two games for the Knights. The famous English striker has played almost 600 games and scored nearly 200 goals in the English leagues, for Carlisle United, Newcastle United, Liverpool, Everton and Manchester City.

In addition he has made more than 50 appearances with the English national team.

4. BOGDAN 'BUGSY' NYSKOHUS

LAST NSL GAME: for Adelaide City against Blacktown City (L2-3) 16 July 1989 at Olympic Sports Field, Adelaide.

Crowd: 3500.

AGED: 39 years 28 days

Bugsy's playing career virtually ceased when he was effectively replaced by new Yugoslav import Milan Ivanovic after round seven in the 1989 season.

However as a tribute to a player who had missed barely a handful of games for Adelaide City since 1977, coach Zoran Matic allowed Nyskohus to play the first ten minutes of City's final game of the 1989 season to record his 300th NSL appearance - the first player in the league to achieve this milestone.

5. BRUCE STOWELL

LAST NSL GAME: for Blacktown City against Adelaide City (L1-2) 28 September 1980 at Gabbie Stadium, Sydney. Crowd: 2248.

AGED: 39 years 8 days

Stowell was coaxed out of retirement by Blacktown in 1980 after being out of the game for two years.

The former Sydney Olympic player was recruited for his experience and to guide an essentially young Blacktown team playing in their first NSL season.

Stowell must have then thought his playing days were well and truly over when he was dropped after round nine.

However with six weeks of the 1980 season remaining and Blacktown deep in the relegation zone, Stowell was reinstated - and helped guide the team well clear

of relegation.

6. MILAN IVANOVIC

LAST NSL GAME: for Adelaide City against Brisbane Strikers (L1-2)

9 October 1999 at Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane. Crowd: 4147.

AGED: 38 years 292 days

The man who in 1989 replaced Bugsy Nyskohus in the Adelaide City sweeper position, and played his final game at an age just two months younger than when Bugsy did, ended his career playing exactly playing the same number of games as his predecessor: 300.

After Ivanovic suddenly announced his retirement just three weeks into the 1999/2000 season, is it also a coincidence that Adelaide City look like missing their first finals campaign since 1989? Milan now coaches Adelaide City's SA Premier League team.

7. VICTOR FERNANDEZ

LAST NSL GAME: for Canberra City against Mooroolbark (L1-4) 24 September 1977 at Manuka Oval, Canberra. Crowd: 1300.

AGED: 38 years 185 days

On the orders of head coach Johnny Warren, the 1977 Canberra City assistant coach Vic Fernandez was rushed into City's playing squad just two weeks into the inaugural NSL season.

The Argentina-born midfielder played just four games in 1977 - one in round two and the remaining three in the final three rounds. Fernandez, who had played for River Plate in Argentina, was player-coach at St George in 1973-76 and was promoted to head coach at Canberra City between 1979 and 1980.

English leagues for two games in the 1999/2000 season.

Rush and Beardsley played together in the Liverpool attack between 1988 and 1991, and in his first game with Olympic - played 21.11.99 against Marconi - Rush scored what turned out to be a winning goal.

9. ALAN DAVIDSON

LAST NSL GAME: for Melbourne Knights against Marconi (L0-5) 12 April 1998 at Marconi Stadium, Sydney. Crowd: 4872.

AGED: 37 years 315 days

The popular 'Davo' closed the door on a long and great career in the Melbourne Knights' last game of the 1997/98 season.

Socceroo legend Davidson had first announced his retirement earlier in the 97/98 season, but was brought back after injuries decimated the Knights' squad.

His national league career started in 1979 with South Melbourne before stints with Notts Forest (England), the Knights, Pahang (Malaysia) and Collingwood Warriors. Between 1980 and 1989 he also played 50 full 'A' internationals for the Australian team.

10. BRANKO BULJEVIC

LAST NSL GAME: for Footscray JUST against Brisbane Lions (L1-2) 7 July 1985 at Schintler Reserve, Melbourne. Crowd: 899.

AGED: 37 years 304 days

After hanging up his boots at the end of the 1983 season, Branko Buljevic was another player who prematurely thought he had retired.

In addition to playing 22 games for the Socceroos, incorporating the three



8. IAN RUSH (left)

LAST NSL GAME: for Sydney Olympic against Adelaide City (W2-0) 4 December 1999 at Belmore Sports Ground, Sydney. Crowd: 5032.

AGED: 38 years 45 days

Like the Melbourne Knights' arrangement with Beardsley, Olympic gained the services of another legend of the

1974 World Cup games, Buljevic had played 161 NSL games for Heidelberg and South Melbourne.

In 1985 he took on the team manager role at Footscray, and by mid-season was lured out of retirement - for nine games - after injury and delays with imported players had crippled the 1985 Footscray squad.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE - ROUND TWENTY SIX

ADELAIDE FORCE v NEWCASTLE BREAKERS

- 1 Wilson Knezevic
- 2 Attilio Hornjik
- 3 Ivan Zelic
- 4 Alex Tobin
- 5 Carlo Talladira
- 6 Damian Mori
- 7 Carl Veart
- 8 Nick Sabljak
- 9 Aurelio Vidmar
- 10 Nathan Day
- 11 John Fusco
- 12 Michael Cartwright
- 13 Louis Brain
- 14 Matthew Kemp
- 15 Angelo Costanzo
- 16 Bradley Hassell
- 17 Claudio Pelosi
- 18 Dong Ki Kim
- 19 Shane Thompson
- 20 Jonathan Lihou



- 1 Bob Catlin
- 2 Shane Pryce
- 3 Andrew Roberts
- 4 Adam Sanderson
- 5 Todd McManus
- 6 Glenn Sprod
- 7 Travis Dodd
- 8 Mark Wilson
- 9 Chris Tancheski
- 10 John Buonavoglia
- 11 Luke Tomich
- 12 Robert Angievski
- 13 Brad Wiecezorek
- 14 Greg Owens
- 15 Joshua Ferguson
- 16 Vasko Trpceviski
- 17 Paul Wheeler
- 18 Andrew Harper
- 19 Chad Mansley
- 20 Bradley Swancott
- 21 Peter Juchniewicz
- 22 Glen Moore
- 23 Damien Smith
- 26 Jason Kos
- 29
- 30



Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium - Friday 17 February 2000 7.30PM
 Head to Head: Played 18 Force wins: 10 Breakers wins: 3 Draws 5
 Last Week: South v Force postponed.
 Breakers 0-1 home loss Knights.

CANBERRA COSMOS v SOUTH MELBOURNE

- 1 David Milin
- 2 Toplica Popovich
- 3 Danny Burt
- 4 Nicholas Purdue
- 5 Jason Polak
- 6 David Winnie
- 7 Daniel Watkins
- 8 Alex Castro
- 9 Michael Musitano
- 10 David Arranz
- 11 Brian Hamilton
- 12 Harry James
- 13 Glen Kolpak
- 14 Ilija Prenzowski
- 15 Robbie Hooker
- 16 Nikola Mrdja
- 17 Geoff Howarth
- 18 Grant Barlow
- 19 Scott Conlon
- 20 Elliot Zwangobani
- 21 Andrew Clark
- 22 PJ Roberts
- 23 Ivo De Jesus
- 24 Gabriel Gonzalez
- 25 Angelo Konstantinou



- 1 Milan Udvaracz
- 2 Steve Iosifidis
- 3 Fausto de Amicis
- 4 Nick Orlic
- 5 Con Blatsis
- 6 David Clarkson
- 7 Steve Panopoulos
- 8 Vaughan Coveny
- 9 Paul Trimboli
- 10 Michael Curcija
- 11 John Anastasiadis
- 12 Richie Alagich
- 13 Adrian Cuzzupe
- 14 Anthony Magnacca
- 15 Goran Lozanovski
- 16 George Goutzoulis
- 17 Jim Tsekinis
- 18 Robert Liparoti
- 19 Tasos Psonis
- 20 Chris Jones
- 21 Rade Culbirk
- 22 Mustafa Mustafa
- 23 Chris Roche
- 24 Andy Vlahos



Venue: Bruce Stadium - Friday 17 March 2000 7.30PM
 Head to Head: Played 10 Cosmos wins: 2 South wins: 4 Draws 4
 Last Week: Cosmos 1-1 away draw with United.
 South v Force postponed.

FOOTBALL KINGZ v NORTHERN SPIRIT

- 1 Michael Utting
- 2 Che Bunce
- 3 Riki Van Steeden
- 4 Jonathon Perry
- 5 Marcus Stergiopoulos
- 6 Wynton Rufer
- 7 Chris Jackson
- 8 Fred de Jong
- 9 Jeff Campbell
- 10 Robbie Middleby
- 11 Harry Ngata
- 12 Levent Osman
- 13 Batrum Suri
- 14 Ivan Vichelich
- 15 Lee Jones
- 16 Mark Elrick
- 17 Stuart Riddle
- 18 Leigh Kenyon
- 19 Jason Batty
- 20 David Moya
- 21 Aaron Silva
- 22 Simon Eaddy
- 23 Ross Nicholson



- 2 Robert Enes
- 3 Matthew Langdon
- 4 Matthew Bingley
- 5 Mark Rudan
- 6 Luke Casserley
- 7 Robbie Slater
- 8 Tony Perinich
- 9 David Seal
- 10 Nicola Berti
- 11 Troy Cranney
- 12 Simon Catanzaro
- 13 Philip Moss
- 14 Shane Lyons
- 15 Anthony Faria
- 16 Paul Bilokapic
- 17 Paul Wearne
- 18 Jess Van Stratten
- 19 Michael Cunico
- 20 Paul Henderson
- 21 Adam Snyder
- 22 Elvis Olic
- 23 Ryan Griffiths
- 24 Jack Sobczyk
- 25 Adam Griffiths
- 26 Abbas Saad
- 27 Ian Crook
- 28 Sean Cranney
- 29 Michael Prentice



Venue: North Harbour Stadium - Friday 17 March 2000 7.30PM
 Head to Head: Played 1 Kingz wins: 0 Spirit wins: 1 Draws 0
 Last Week: Kingz 5-1 away loss to Wolves.
 Spirit 2-1 home win over Stallions.

GIPPSLAND FALCONS v WOLLONGONG WOLVES

- 1 Bojo Jevdjovic
- 2 Dean Fak
- 3 Manny Gotis
- 4 Mehmed Durakovic
- 5 Jeff Hopkins
- 6 Brian MacNichol
- 7 Andy Vargas
- 8 Clayton Bell
- 9 Robbie Puca
- 10 Sandy Robertson
- 11 John Hutchinson
- 12 Peter Kakos
- 13 Adrian Savage
- 14 Doug Marcina
- 15 Jonathon Buhugiar
- 16 Juan Nilo
- 17 Michael Katz
- 18 Igor Mandic
- 19 Simon Miotto
- 20 Ben Cassar



- 1 Leslie Pogliacomi
- 2 George Souris
- 3 Alvin Ceccoli
- 4 Robert Stanton
- 5 David Cervinski
- 6 Matthew Horsley
- 7 Paul Reid
- 8 Anthony Surjan
- 9 Sasho Dimoski
- 10 Stuart Young
- 11 Scott Chipperfield
- 12 Neil Harlock
- 13 Noel Spencer
- 14 Saso Petrovski
- 15 David Huxley
- 16 Peter Lahanas
- 17 Esala Masi
- 18 Chad Bishop
- 19 Paul Dimech
- 20 Daniel Bertrame
- 21 Christian Zelvis



Venue: Falcons Stadium - Saturday 18 March 2000 6.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 16 Falcons: 6 Wolves wins: 7 Draws 3
 Last week: Falcons 1-0 away loss Olympic.
 Wolves 5-1 home win over Kingz.

BRISBANE STRIKERS v SYDNEY UNITED

- 1 Clint Bolton
- 2 Glenn Gwynne
- 3 Shane Stefanutto
- 4 Andrew Davidson
- 5 Matthew Beill
- 6 Brad Ditton
- 7 Shane Smeltz
- 8 David Pilic
- 9 Paul Foster
- 10 Wayne Srhoj
- 11 Chay Hews
- 12 Peter Dwyer
- 13 Stuart McClaren
- 14 Jade North
- 15 Mark Battistin
- 16 Peter Grierson
- 17 Jeromy Harris
- 18 Nick Meredith
- 19 Wade Baldwin
- 20 Daniel Duke
- 21 Jon McKain



- 1 John Crawley
- 2 Ray Younis
- 3 Mark Racker
- 4 Velimir Kupresak
- 5 Eddie Bosnar
- 6 Vince Savocca
- 7 Mirko Jurilj
- 8 Nahuel Arrarte
- 9 Mario Jermen
- 10 Ante Moric
- 11 Tom Pondeljak
- 12 Tom Maric
- 13 Matthew Zec
- 14 Kain Rastall
- 15 Aytec Genc
- 16 Joe Moric
- 17 Nick Bosevski
- 18 Steve Bozinovski
- 19 Greg Saric
- 20 Steve Tollos
- 21 Zvonko Uslebrka
- 22 Colin Luff
- 23 Terry Palapanis
- 24 Andy Rakic
- 25 Ante Deak
- 26 Brett Hughes



Venue: Suncorp Metway Stadium - Saturday 18 March 2000 7.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 23 Strikers wins: 4 United wins: 15 Draws 4
 Last week: Strikers 1-0 away loss to Carlton.
 United 1-1 home draw with Cosmos.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS v PERTH GLORY

- 1 Joey Rayher
- 2 Ivan Jolic
- 3 Ante Kovacevic
- 4 Jason Vukadin
- 5 John Didulica
- 6 Mark Silic
- 7 Dragi Nastevski
- 8 Ivan Kelic
- 9 Paul Urlovic
- 10 Mijo Trupkovic
- 11 Murtala Toyin Abbas
- 12 Lance Plunkett
- 13 Paul Magdic
- 14 Ransford Banini
- 15 Alex Kriatzoglou
- 16 Brandon Vassalo
- 17 Roddy Vargas
- 18 Zlatko Maglic
- 19 Martin John
- 20 Zeljko Susa
- 21 Steven Tillinger
- 22 Michael Reda
- 23 Hrvoje Matkovic
- 24 Adrian Cervinski
- 25 Marko Prskalo



- 1 Tom Tomich
- 2 Robert Trajkovski
- 3 Jamie Harnwell
- 4 Aurelio
- 5 Vinko Buljubasic
- 6 Gareth Naven
- 7 Scott Miller
- 8 Troy Halpin
- 9 Alistair Edwards
- 10 Bobby Despotoski
- 11 Kasey Wehrman
- 12 Peter Buljan
- 13 James Afkos
- 14 Dion Valle
- 15 Edgar Junior
- 16 Con Boutsianis
- 17 Vas Kalogeracos
- 18 Hamilton Thorp
- 19 John Carbone
- 20 Tony Franken
- 21 Ivan Ergic
- 22 Ljubo Milicevic
- 23 Jason Petkovic
- 24 Aaron Cole
- 25 Gary Faria



Venue: Knights Stadium - Saturday 19 March 2000 7.30PM
 Head to Head: Played 8 Knights wins: 1 Glory wins: 6 Draws 2
 Last week: Knights 0-1 away win over Breakers.
 Glory 2-1 home win over Power.

LIVE FRIDAY 17 MARCH 7.30

C7 SPORT CHANNEL 12

**PARRAMATTA POWER V
CARLTON**



POWER
1 Andrew Crews
2 David Barrett
3 Michael Santalab
4 Steve Eagleton
5 Richard Plesa
6 Joe Vrkic
7 Jacob Burns
8 Walter Ardona
9 Mile Sterjovski
10 Joel Griffiths
11 Steve Berry
12 Stephen Laybutt
13 Milan Blagojevic (below)
14 John Angelucci
15 Danny Townsend
16 Mark Byrnes
17 Danny Kukucka
18 Lachlan Campbell
19 Matt Thompson
20 Barney Smith
21 Ahmid Elrich
23 John Gibson
24
25
26
28 Peter Bennett
29
30 Mike Gibson

CARLTON
1 Dean Anastasiadis
2 Dave McPherson
3 Craig Deans
4 Simon Colosimo
5 Sean Douglas
6 Andrew Marth
7 Stuart Slater
8 Mark Atkinson
9 Alex Moreira
10 Lubo Lapsansky
11 Archie Thompson
12 Mike Conroy
13 Steve Martin
14 John Markovski
15 Con Anthopoulos
16 David Terminello
17 Joe Tricarico
18 David Della Rocca
19 Serdar Pir
20 Adrian Cagalj
21 Andrew Packer
22 Angelo Moutsopoulos
23 Colin Azzopardi
24 Joshua Kennedy
25
26 Steve Horvat



Venue: Parramatta Stadium
Friday 17 March 7.30PM
Head-to-Head: 1
Power: 1
Carlton: 0
Draws: 0
Last Week: Power 2-1 away loss to Glory
Carlton 1-0 home win over Strikers



SUNDAY 19 MARCH 7.30

C7 SPORT CHANNEL 12

**MARCONI STALLIONS V
SYDNEY OLYMPIC**



STALLIONS
1 Michael Turnbull
2 Chad Gibson
3 Mark Babic
4
5 Dominic Longo
6 Pan-Kaun Kim
7 Christian Care
8 Darren McDonald
9 Zeljko Babic
10 Brad Maloney
11 Mike Smith
12
13 Danny Invincible
14 Buddy Farah (below)
15 Pierluigi di Gia
16
17 Francis Awaritefe
18 Harry Karl
19 Brendan Renaud
20 David Aceski
21 Paolo Marchesini
22 Kris Trajanovski
23 Vlado Zoric
24 Josala Junior Sauturaga
25
26 Daniel Severino

1 Jim Kourtis
2 Scott Thomas
3 Chris Zoricich
4 Peter Tsekenis
5 Scott Baillie
6 Ante Juric
7 Zlatko Arambasic
8 Marcus Phillips
9 Pablo Cardozo
10 Brett Emerton
11 Chris Kalantzis
12 Sebastian Sinozic
13
14 Gabriel Mendez
15 Lindsay Wilson
16
17 Paul Kohler
18 John Kyriazopoulos
19 Nick Carle
20 George Bouhoutsos
21 Lee Miot
22 Pete Zorbas
23 Dylan Macallister
24 Norman Tome
25 Hussein Jomaa
26 Adam Ciantar
27 John Perosh
30 John Karoubas



Venue: Marconi Stadium
Sunday 19 March 6.00PM
Head to Head: 55
Stallions: 15
Olympic: 22
Draws: 18
Last Week: Stallions 2-1 away loss to Spirit.
Olympic 1-0 home win over Falcons.



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